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'How I Ran Off 12st!' p17

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*How To Lift Motivation
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TRY THIS TO RECOVER QUICKER p77

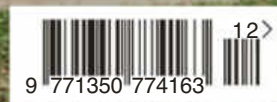
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THE MIND ISSUE

- ✓ *Blitz Stress*
- ✓ *Boost Brainpower*
- ✓ *Beat Ageing*

3 KEYS TO A NEW PB p74

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RUN LONG DISTANCES ON AUTO PILOT

ASICS GEL-KAYANO 22



asics

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VOL 23
NO. 12

Cover photography
Robert Grischek



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RAVE RUN

📍 Lisbon, Portugal

📷 Scott Markewitz

👤 Florentin LeProvost, Emeline Barat

Travessa do Sequeiro is one of the steep cobblestone streets that criss-cross Lisbon. At dawn, this part of the city is a hidden gem for runners, says Florentin LeProvost.





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I fell back into full trail-running action last month, covering seven miles of tough offroad terrain at the excellent Exmoor Stumble. Hard on the legs, but highly rewarding – especially the post-run cake!



It's a measure of how good the Jersey Marathon is that I thoroughly enjoyed it even though injury ruined my PB plans seven weeks out. Coastal views, raucous crowds, and free beer and burgers at the end.

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Johnny Dee

The regular *RW* and *Guardian* contributor turned running Santa for us with his guide to the best festive races the UK has to offer. Check out the Santa suits, reindeer antlers and post-run mince pies, and decide what to put on your Christmas list. **p93**



Nick Dines

The freelance journalist sat down with Olympian-turned-author Matthew Syed to discuss the core concept of his new book, *Black Box Thinking: the Surprising Truth about Success*. Find out how to use failure as your fast track to glory on **p36**.

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FROM THE EDITOR



One of my favourite running quotes is from Kenyan former distance runner Paul Tergat. It goes: 'Ask yourself: "Can I give more?"' The answer is usually: "Yes." I love its

simplicity and positivity, and that it's equally applicable to someone breaking the marathon world record (like him), and a mid-pack trier (like me). And its reference to a runner's thought process reminds us that the mental side of our sport is hugely important, something we explore in depth in 'The Mind Issue'.

Quite often, our natural reaction to a dreadful run or race is to try to bury the memory of it as swiftly as possible. But our feature on page 36 argues that a clear-eyed analysis of what went wrong – so-called 'black box thinking' – can lead to improved performance in future.

The yin to that analytical process's yang can be found in our feature on page 42, which shows that cultivating a playful approach in your running can restore its fun factor. As someone who recently rediscovered the childlike joy of not stepping on pavement cracks on a run, I'm definitely on board with this.

And on page 48 we look at the ways that your running benefits your brain, whether that's through the fabled runner's high, unlocking your creative-thinking abilities or reducing your long-term risk of suffering from dementia.

Basically, we're all doing something that makes us fitter and smarter. And in my mind, that's a win-win.

Andy Dixon, Editor, @RW_ed_Andy

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Warm⏻ups

NEWS YOU NEED TO GET UP TO SPEED



SPRING TIME
Take a running
jump at a PB

BOUND FOR GLORY

Want to know if you're on PB form? Go jump. In a Spanish study¹, the height runners reached in a standing jump test was an indication of subsequent performance. Participants jumped nine per cent higher in the week they ran their best race of the season compared with the height reached before their slowest race. Jumping requires good lower body strength and smooth neuromuscular coordination, both of which help you finish faster.

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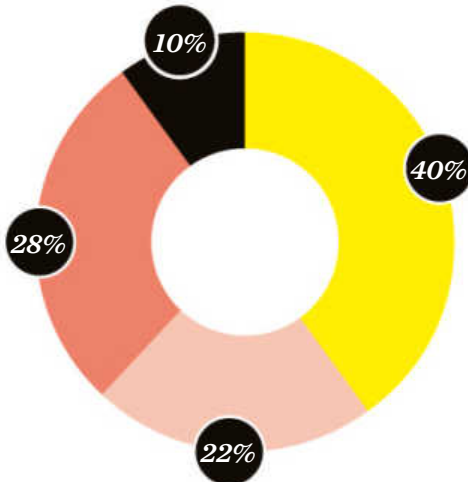
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Poll position

How do you approach hydration on the run?



● Rehydrate after (202 runners) ● Go with flow (110)
● Carry water (143) ● Drink to schedule (47)*



WIN THE DAY
Start as you
mean to go on

MAKE A MEAL OF BREAKFAST

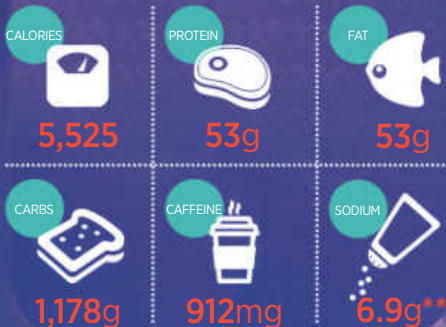
Skipping breakfast could affect your evening run even if you compensate by eating more at lunchtime, suggests new research¹. When cyclists took part in a 30-minute time trial at 5pm they performed 4.5 per cent worse when they had no breakfast than they did on a day they ate breakfast, despite eating more at lunchtime. (For more reasons why breakfast is vital for runners, and what to eat before early runs, see p78.)

6

THE MG/KG OF BODY WEIGHT OF CAFFEINE CONSUMED DURING A 90-MINUTE RUN THAT IMPAIRED RUNNERS' ABILITY TO FALL ASLEEP.⁵

Eating up the miles

Average fuel consumption by elite ultra runners during a 100-mile race



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Away with the dairy

Protect bones pre-run

Got a long run planned? A milk-based smoothie is a good pre-workout snack. A new study⁴ shows consuming calcium-rich dairy food two hours before a long, hard workout reduces bone resorption (release of calcium from the bones into the blood) afterwards. When resorption outstrips ossification (laying down new bone), bone mineral density is reduced. The athletes took in 1,350mg of calcium – equal to almost two pints of milk.

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16gFIBRE
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3.5gFAT
8.5g

*All nutritional data is per serving

INGREDIENTS

- ◆ 15g dried porcini mushrooms
- ◆ 150g thinly sliced shiitake mushroom caps
- ◆ 60g thinly sliced chanterelle mushrooms
- ◆ 3 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- ◆ 3 large onions, sliced into thin rings
- ◆ 3 garlic cloves, minced
- ◆ 3 tbsp mirin (£4.55 for 250ml waitrose.com)
- ◆ ¼ tsp sea salt
- ◆ ½ tsp dried thyme
- ◆ 1 litre vegetable stock
- ◆ Freshly ground pepper
- ◆ 3 tbsp sweet white miso paste dissolved in 250ml water (£4.49 for 250g, clearspring.co.uk)

METHOD

1/ Reconstitute the dried porcini mushrooms by soaking them in 250ml of hot water for 20 minutes. When they're ready, remove and slice them, but save the water. Wipe the shiitake and chanterelle mushrooms with a damp sponge to remove dirt. Take off and discard the stems from the shiitakes and slice the caps into thin strips. Next, chop the chanterelles into 0.5cm slices.

2/ In a large frying pan, sauté the onions in olive oil over a medium heat until evenly browned (about 10 minutes). Add the garlic and mirin and sauté for another couple of minutes. Add the mushrooms and sauté until they're evenly browned (about seven minutes). To avoid sticking, deglaze the pan with water, one tablespoon at a time, as needed. Stir in the salt and thyme, remove from the heat and transfer the mixture to a medium heavy-based saucepan or hob-friendly casserole dish.

3/ Strain the liquid from the soaked porcini and add to the saucepan or casserole dish, along with the vegetable stock and plenty of pepper. Simmer for five minutes, then remove from the heat. Purée briefly with a handheld blender to thicken, but leave most of the mushroom pieces whole. Allow the soup to cool slightly before stirring in the miso mixture. Serve warm. If you aren't going dairy-free, sprinkle some grated Parmesan or cheddar on top for a hit of added flavour and texture.



SOUPEUR BOWL
Spoon-feed yourself some goodness

MUSH ADO ABOUT SOUP

This soothing mushroom soup with caramelised onions offers the perfect balance of earthy richness and tangy sweetness. It's a great way to warm up after a cold run, and it's packed with minerals and phytonutrients to aid recovery and support the immune system. It's also high in fibre. Because this dish is made without butter or cream it's light on calories, but it's still exceptionally tasty and surprisingly satisfying.

**Onions**

They are high in the antioxidant quercetin, which has been shown to support respiratory health and healthy blood pressure.

**Shiitake mushrooms**

These mushrooms are rich in the antioxidant selenium. They also contain lentinan, which is used to help fight cancer.

**Miso**

Miso is rich in the antioxidant minerals zinc, copper and manganese. This fermented soybean extract is also good for the gut, supporting healthy microbes.



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How I ran it off

'I'M HOOKED ON RUNNING'

My old life

I weighed 18 stone when I was 15. Two years later I injured my neck playing rugby, gave up the game and piled on more weight. At one point my bathroom scales registered 'error' when I stood on them – I'd exceeded the 26st 7lb maximum.

I ate anything I could find.

What I was going to eat was my first thought when I woke up in the morning.

I spent my free time playing computer games.

My mood was low and I would eat more because I felt so down.

Being so large cost me a fortune. In addition to all the food, I had to buy clothes from a specialist 'oversize' shop because of my 66in chest and 76in waist.

The turnaround

I noticed a small lump on my left testicle. By April 2014 it was the size of a tennis ball. It was cancer. I underwent surgery and chemotherapy. That was a wake-up call.

The London Marathon highlights were on TV when I was waiting in hospital for my operation. I told my wife, Deanne, that I'd like to do it one day. She didn't think I was serious.

Six weeks after surgery I bought a treadmill.

I managed 200m the first time, but two weeks later I managed to run for an hour.

I lost 2.5 stone in the first month and around a stone a month after that. I did it by changing what I ate, focusing on my five a day, drinking more water and massively reducing my portion sizes.

I got a place in the London Marathon. I'd only been running for three months and still weighed 23 stone. I finished in 5:08, running for Macmillan Cancer Support.

*Name David Rendall
Age 32*

*Hometown Salisbury,
Wiltshire*

Weight before 28st 7lb

Weight lost 11st 13lb

Weight now 16st 8lb

The future

I run around 35 miles a week. I often get up at 5:30am to fit in a run before work. I always feel better afterwards, however hard it feels at the time.

I used to be obsessed with food, but now I'm hooked on running.

I want to get my marathon time down.

I've realised I have to be really focused and make running a priority to get the most out of it.

My goal weight is 15st 10lb.

I weigh myself once a week to check I'm still going in the right direction. If I'm not, I tweak my eating and running.



David's top tips

How he got where he is today



Find new eating habits. Swap biscuits and crisps for fresh fruit.



Bring extra exercise into your daily routine. I now cycle to work and back.



Make healthier versions of your favourite meals. We now eat fish without batter.



Acknowledge progress. Stay motivated by telling yourself how far you've come.





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HEARTBEAT**

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RHYTHM AND CRUISE

Tune in for an easy way to boost your cadence. In a study¹, the music-free stride frequency of a group of runners was determined. Then they ran to music with a tempo that mirrored their cadence. Research has shown we don't consciously detect changes of less than four per cent in music tempo, so the researchers dropped or raised tempo by one to three per cent. The runners synchronised their cadence to the new rhythm without being aware of it.



Play it by ear Technology can help you find music to match your ideal cadence. A run feature on Spotify (spotify.com) streams music that synchronises to your existing cadence or allows you to adjust tempo manually. And Tempo Run (temporunapp.com) categorises your music by beats per minute.

JARGON BUSTER

DATE PACE

This is your current best pace for a given distance, rather than the pace required to hit your desired race goal time. Most running coaches will include date- and goal-pace efforts in their schedules, and so should you.



BEAT A PATH
Tune in and speed up

Quick-fire question

Is it OK to run if my muscles are still sore from my last workout?

Yes, as long as any soreness or stiffness you're feeling is general and not a specific sharp pain. Make sure you spend a little more time than usual warming up and don't run too far or

too fast. If you aren't sure whether you should run or not, try 10 minutes at an easy pace: if you feel fine, keep going; if you get sorer, stop. *Russell Holman, runfaster-pb.com*

10%

THE DROP IN RUNNING ECONOMY WHEN PRO ATHLETES RAN ON A TREADMILL COMPARED WITH OUTDOORS. THIS MAY BE DUE TO STRIDE ADJUSTMENTS ON THE TREADMILL.²

Instant wisdom

'Make your race a playground, not a proving ground.'

Lauren Fleshman, US elite distance runner

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SIGN OF THE TIME

A familiar race route is your best bet if you want to end the year with a PB, suggests a recent study in the *Journal of Sports Medicine and Physical Fitness*. Familiar landmarks let you know how much of the course is left, which means you don't hold back needlessly. In the study, cyclists who knew how far they had left to ride recorded higher oxygen consumption and muscle-activity levels than when they weren't in the know, as they were conserving energy 'just in case'.

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Echinaforce tincture

£9.15 for 50ml, avogel.co.uk

One study of athletes suggests echinacea may lower the incidence of colds, and it may also shorten their duration. Fifteen drops of Echinaforce provides 543mg of echinacea extract.



Mico-Rei Pure Reishi Extract

£55.50 for 70 capsules, hifasdaterra.com

The bitter-tasting reishi mushroom is gaining interest for its effect on immunity. One study found it could counteract immune-system suppression caused by a month of heavy exercise.

I am so over training

How much is far too much?

In a study¹, athletes were overtrained for three weeks – half showed performance declines and two-thirds of these also developed upper respiratory tract infections (URTIs). The other half showed a slight rise in URTIs but no performance dip. Think twice about adding sessions in the lead-up to a race. Three signs you're overtraining:



Resting heart rate:
is it five or more beats higher than normal?



Low immune system:
regular illness and slow healing time.



Sleep disturbances:
waking up early, trouble sleeping.

20

THE NUMBER OF MINUTES OF RUNNING, PERFORMED FIVE TIMES A WEEK THAT BOOSTED PROBLEM-SOLVING, PERSISTENCE AND TASK PRODUCTIVITY IN RATS.²

NEW

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OFF COURSE
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country club



Be your own gait keeper

Try this form fix

You're mid-run when a niggle develops. Running-form guru Jae Gruenke (balancedrunner.com) has a trick to get you through. 'Imagine you have the same problem on the other side of your body,' she says. 'Imagine the sensation as fully as you can, and how you're moving [compensating] as a result. You'll feel your gait alter and discomfort fade.' How? 'My best guess is that you are providing a stimulus to the subconscious part of your brain that coordinates movement, to reverse the patterns causing the pain.'

GO OFF COURSE

Want to stay injury-free? Go offroad. A study has found cross-country runners suffer fewer injuries than other runners. Cross-country races are typically five to eight miles in length so there's less risk from excessive mileage, while the varied terrain provides constant stimulus. 'Keeping your balance through twists and turns builds core strength,' says Julian Goater, coach and author of *The Art of Running Faster* (Human Kinetics). 'The soft, forgiving, sticky surfaces increase resistance, making you stronger, and they also reduce the jarring effect on your body.'

Two-way tip

Recover fast from long runs



Legs up

The posture Viparita Karani is great for recovery, says yoga instructor Rebecca Pacheco. With your hips close to the base of a wall, swing your legs up and lie back, arms by your sides, for up to 10 mins.



Drink up

Have a casein-rich drink before bed. This protein will maximise muscle regeneration while you sleep. Try Neat Nutrition Slow Release Protein (£34 for 1kg, neat-nutrition.com).

One key move

Eccentric lowering

Use this eccentric (lengthening under resistance) move to strengthen injured hamstrings.

- 1/ Lie on your back, a resistance band secured to a support behind you. Put the ankle of your 'bad' leg in the loop of the band and let it slowly pull your leg up.
- 2/ Cross the free leg over the ankle in the band and slowly lower the banded leg to the ground.



- 3/ Allow the band to pull your leg back up for the next repetition.
- 4/ Maintain a resistance that allows you to do 3 x 20 slow repetitions. For rehab, perform daily.

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YOUNG GUNS

THE NEXT LEVEL

Britain's young athletes are taking it to the next level as the countdown to Rio 2016 continues. Kyle is leading the way with a Worlds appearance under his belt, but the rest of the Young Guns - David, Shona, and Yasmin - have each made progress as they aim to be on the plane for next year's trip to Brazil. We're following them closely, so head online to Pro:Direct Running for exclusive insight into what it takes to rise to the top.



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‘We will beat this’

Devastating news did not stop Rebecca Griffiths from running – and inspiring others to do the same

Words Kit Fox Photography Ben Knight

I have the worst news I could possibly give you,' said the doctor to Rebecca Griffiths. It was August 5, 2014 and they were sitting in a drab, out-of-the-way room at Hinchingsbrooke Hospital – the sort of room where Rebecca – a sergeant in the murder investigation unit of Cambridgeshire Police – would sometimes have to deliver terrible news.

The diagnosis: inoperable liver and bowel cancer. The worst-case scenario, the doctor told her, was two weeks. Best case, a few months. She was 32 years old. She didn't smoke. She ran at least three days a week. She had two sons – William, five, and Benjamin, just seven months old.

Rebecca went back to the hospital with her husband, Jon, two days after the diagnosis, to see lead clinician Dr Cheryl Palmer. When they walked in to her office, it appeared that she had been crying. 'Dr Palmer doesn't have a very good poker face,' says Rebecca.

The scans showed a dark mass that stretched across Rebecca's abdomen. No healthy liver tissue was visible. Dr Palmer put her on a course of chemotherapy because it was the only thing she could do. But Rebecca was not about to give up.

Running was the reason she went to the hospital in the first place. In summer 2014, during her usual five-mile run, something had felt 'off'. 'I had no energy,' she says. 'I was frustrated that I couldn't push myself.' A runner since she was seven, Rebecca was returning to the sport after the birth of Benjamin. Then she found out she had cancer.

When she finished the three-month course of chemotherapy, during which she physically couldn't get back on the road, she returned to Dr Palmer's office.

doctors' estimates, race day would constitute borrowed time for Rebecca. But that did not stop her signing up.

She gradually rebuilt her mileage, gaining confidence as her fitness returned. 'It was hard but, as with all running, it became easier by doing it,' she says. She also set about convincing others to sign up for the race alongside her as 'Team Bex', to raise funds for the Hunts Community Cancer Network, a charity that helps teach people how to manage their cancer. Nurses in the organisation travel to patients' homes to provide care, take blood, perform health checks and offer support and advice. 'They teach you how to live as normal a life as possible with your diagnosis and try to fit around your routine rather than dictating it,' says Rebecca. 'They come to my house at a pre-agreed time two days before treatment to attach the port for chemo and take blood, so there is no travelling or waiting around at hospital.'

At first, Team Bex consisted of friends and family she'd recruited. Then some of Rebecca's nurses joined the team. Others with cancer who sat next to her during chemo treatments also joined.

The team met for training runs three times a week. Numbers grew with every session. In September, a 197-strong contingent from Team Bex took part in the local Parkrun, setting a record for the greatest number of charity runners from one 'club'. Jon was one of them.

'I wasn't a runner until Rebecca and I got together,' he says. 'I run because she loves it so much. If anything comes out of this, a lot of people in this town will be much fitter.'

They already are. Team Bex now has more than 360 members. 'The youngest is four and the oldest is 64. It's amazing to think the majority never ran before,' says Rebecca. On October 11, 250 of them joined her on the start line of the half marathon. 'It was a truly incredible day,' she says. 'I felt tired towards the



'This does not happen, this is amazing'

The doctor was beaming. Rebecca's liver had shrunk to a normal size. Only two splotches, each the size of a penny, remained. 'This does not happen,' the doctor said. 'This is amazing.'

Rebecca responded to the news with quiet conviction. 'We will beat this. I guarantee by this time next year I will have run a half marathon.'

A week later, she laced up her running shoes for the first time in months. 'It felt so good to put those shoes on again,' she says. She ran and walked two-and-a-half miles, focusing on reaching one lamppost and then the next.

Once home, she logged on to the website for the Perkins Great Eastern Run. A clock on the page was counting down the days until the start of the half-marathon race in October. By the



THE POWER OF PINK (top) Members and supporters of fundraising group Team Bex, and (below) Rebecca at Parkrun with her dad, Christopher, and son William

end of the run but the whole team gathered along the 200m finish stretch to cheer me home. It was a sea of pink.'

Rebecca, now 33, is not cancer-free. Her doctors aren't sure she ever will be. She continues to receive chemo every other week. But her prognosis is good and her treatments have given her more time than the doctors thought possible.

Among Rebecca's cancer-related paperwork is a letter from her doctors to her insurance company. It was written just after her initial diagnosis. She won't read it. Instead, she laces up her trainers. Many of her runs take her past Hinchingsbrooke Hospital.

'When I run past that hospital I think, "See, I told you." Never count me out.'

● justgiving.com/rebecca-Griffiths4



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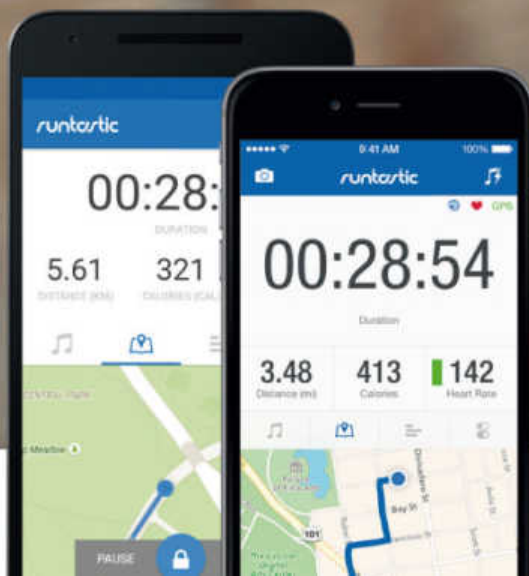
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WHAT IT TAKES TO...

Break a record by days

A distance of 630 miles, with 35,031m of climb, 302 bridges and 921 stiles... that's what **Mark Berry** faced in June in his attempt to set a new record for the fastest completion of the South West Coast Path. He finished in 11 days, eight hours and 15 minutes, knocking three days off the previous fastest time.

Yet four years ago Mark wasn't a runner at all. 'I started running in January 2012, as I had recently turned 50 and decided I wanted to run a marathon,' says the social worker from Bishops Tawton in North Devon. His first outings were on the road but he quickly discovered a penchant for trails. 'I entered several off-road races and, to my amazement, found I was placing in my age category. I wasn't quick, but I could keep going, even on hilly terrain.'



LIQUID REFRESHMENT
Mark rewards his feet with a cool dip

The idea of running the coast path came when Mark and his wife, Lorraine, walked it. 'I'd wanted to do a multi-day challenge for a while and I loved the idea of running home,' says Mark, now 54.

While the path is notoriously hard going, Mark says the views more than made up for it. 'It was just beautiful. I felt so lucky to have two whole weeks to do nothing but run in such stunning surroundings.' The only low point came early on: 'On day one, about 40 miles in, I felt exhausted and really down. I thought, "How am I going to cope if I

can't even manage the first day?" But I'd got my nutrition wrong and had run out of energy. It didn't happen again.'

Having suffered from depression, Mark used his epic run to raise funds and awareness for the charity CALM (Campaign Against Living Miserably), which strives to support men with mental health issues and to reduce the incidence of male suicide. 'My aim was to raise £6,300 – £10 for each mile – but I've already exceeded £10,000.'

● justgiving.com/CALMSWCPchallenge



A LONG ROAD
Ian now and (inset)
when he was ill

In 2011, **Ian Sockett** spoke to RW about his anorexia. He developed the eating disorder in his schooldays and it plagued him for 25 years. In 2008 his lung collapsed and he was admitted to hospital – he weighed just six stone.

'Those days in hospital were life-changing,' Ian told us at the time. 'It dawned on me how precious life was.'

With his parents' support Ian slowly recovered. And, determined to prove he'd beaten anorexia, he entered the Paris Marathon. He finished in 4:04. He's now run seven marathons, recently going sub-three for the first time.

'When I shared my experience, it resonated with many readers,' says Ian, now 45. 'The desire to shave those seconds, train that bit harder and run that bit further is all too common among us. It doesn't make sense to starve yourself, but no mental health issue makes sense, it just takes over. I want people who have experienced, or are experiencing, similar problems to know you can beat anorexia. The body is an incredible machine that can heal itself even after it's been abused. Running saved my life.'

● If you need help with an eating disorder, visit b-eat.co.uk

Run yourself healthy

Words **Sam Murphy** Illustration **Son of Alan**

The rules of running

No 37: Run the mile you're in

When racing, it can be tempting to dwell on the total distance or on how far you are from the finish line. Try not to. Instead, focus on the mile you're running at that particular moment. That's a nice metaphor for life, too, by the way. If you were looking for one.



● Extract from *The Runner's Rule Book* by Mark Remy (£11.99, Rodale Press).

LETTER OF THE MONTH

HERE'S TO RUNNING

Four months ago I bought a copy of *Runner's World*, hoping it would inspire me to get fitter and cut back on the alcohol that was becoming a problem. I was a decent-standard club runner in the 1990s before injuries and relocation put running on hold. Booze took its place. But little by little the drinking is becoming less frequent and the running more regular. My evenings are no longer a haze. I'm down to a glass of wine one night a week and I've signed up for a four-mile race in December. Thank you, *Runner's World*.

Name and address withheld



A DRAKE'S PROGRESS
Ken and his running pal

Dogged runners

As a physical training instructor in the Army Reserve, I have always been interested in your articles on how running gives a host of health benefits and extends lifespan. I had two Labradors who ran six days a week with me, covering four to six miles each morning until I 'retired' them when they were about 12 years old. One lived to be 16 and the other, 17, and they died of old age, not disease. The normal life span for a Labrador is 11-13

years. My current running mate, a Labrador Pointer cross called Drake, is now 12 and due for running retirement, but still acts like a puppy. Long live runners!

Ken Pemble,
Barnet, Herts

Small wonder

Kerry McCarthy's article on the inaugural Nevis Marathon – the smallest marathon in the world (RW, July) – captured my attention. I entered – with my wife, Pat,



LONG JOURNEY
Brendan at the Nevis Marathon

signing up for the half – and it turned out to be a great decision. Nevis is a true gem – the people are friendly, cheerful and welcoming, and the mountains, forests, aquarium-like sea and wide, sandy beaches are among the best in the world. The route was brilliant, with local wildlife and livestock – including green vervet monkeys, feral pigs and goats – outnumbering spectators. I'd urge more runners to take up the challenge next year.

Brendan Cradden,
by email



RECORD RUN
Success for Adrian

Subscribe to success

A year of subscribing to RW has supplied me both with full-on running revolutions – a solid training plan, advice on shoes, diet and core training – and 'marginal gains' (compression socks for recovery, increased cadence). The result of this performance-enhancing blueprint? A new half-marathon PB of 1:30:13. I beat my previous best time at the same race by over seven minutes.

Adrian Bird,
Cheltenham

Stick 'em up

I love the *50 Best Moves* feature (RW, Nov) – it's just what I've been looking for. But I can see that my magazine is going to get dog-eared fast. Is there any chance you could do it as a poster I can put up in my garage gym?

Dave Pavey,
Churchdown, Glos.



3

readers supported Jane Harle's plea (RW, November) for running kit in larger sizes.

'It's ridiculous that a ladies' large in sports clothes is a size 14. It's hardly an incentive for larger women to participate.'

Emma Jones,
Wantage, Oxfordshire.

11

per cent of letters appreciated Andy Baddeley's disclosure (RW, Nov) of depression as a result of injury.

1

reader confessed to having her first 'running dream': forgetting her bib safety pins and missing the start of her race.

What is the etiquette for a short, sharp nasal clearing? As a new runner, I've found it a grim but necessary habit to avoid constant sniffing.

Dave Comeau, *Caterham, Surrey*

RW says How do you go about keeping your nose clean? Let us know

What's inspired or annoyed you this month? The writer of the winning letter will receive a pair of Saucony ProGrid Hurricane 16 shoes, worth £110.*

Write ▶ Letters, *Runner's World*, 33 Broadwick St, London W1F 0DQ Email ▶ letters@runnersworld.co.uk Twitter ▶ [@runnersworlduk](https://twitter.com/runnersworlduk) Facebook ▶ [runnersworlduk](https://www.facebook.com/runnersworlduk)



WIN!

Running mates

With social running, the run is just part of the fun

More and more runners are coming together to mix their favourite sport with other pleasures, such as beer, coffee and books, prioritising social interaction and shared enjoyment above individual performance. At the Shoes & Brews running store and bar in Longmont, Colorado, US, (shoesbrews.com) runners can

chew the fat over a craft beer. And in Albany, New York, there's the Long Run Book Club, where discussion of the month's designated read makes the miles sail by. The trend is catching on here, too, allowing runners around the country to turn what can often be a solitary pursuit into a stimulating social occasion.



The urban explorers

Manchester-based Still Waters Run Deep formed in 2013 as an excuse to explore the city after dark. The group meets every Monday night and runs seven to 14K. 'We like to think that we offer an alternative experience to traditional run clubs in that we take inspiration from the sights and sounds of our landscape, and we use these to form our routes,' says co-founder Ciaran O'Neill. The group now has 50 members. stillwatersrundedeepmcr.tumblr.com



The espresso lovers

Panayiotis Sinnos started a running group from his family's coffee shop, Paperback Coffee, in Ealing, three years ago to rejuvenate his running. 'We now have a group of 15-30 runners who meet every Saturday,' he says. 'We're not a club – just a crew of friends who live nearby. No-one gets left behind. It's about love, sharing and community spirit... and some running.' paperbackcoffee.com



The brunch runners

LDN Brunch Runners run every Sunday morning from the NikeLab 1948 LDN shop in Shoreditch, London, and gather afterwards for a post-run brunch. 'The brunch element became a reward for getting out for a run early in the morning and it's also a great opportunity to socialise with other like-minded runners,' says LDN Brunch Club co-founder Stephen Adjaidoo. ldnbrunchclub.co.uk



The Christmas (and beyond) runners

Advent Running launched in December 2014 to encourage people to run for the first 25 days of December. 'It started with about 20 people but soon our Facebook page had hundreds of stories of people in far-flung places joining in,' say founders James Poole and Claudia Schroegel. The 50-strong group meets three or four times a week. adventrunning.com



The burger runners

Gourmet burger chain Shake Shack holds two run groups – the Covent Garden Shack, with running partner Good Vibes Studio, and the Stratford Shack, with Run Newham. Each week a group of 20-30 runners takes in the sights of London, with burgers to follow. 'We wanted to connect with the community in a fun way,' says Shake Shack's Allan Ng. facebook.com/shakeshackUK



RUNNING COMMENTARY

THOUGHT
THAT
COUNTS



‘The more varied your menu, the better’

Nearing the end of a year in which I’ve battled injury and fretted over paltry mileage, I realise that I’m emerging as a more rounded athlete. On holiday in the Lake District last month I ran along the shore of Coniston Water. I also cycled around the lake, swam across it, kayaked its length and hiked up and down the surrounding hills.

Cycling has given me the staying power for longer workouts – I think nothing of four hours in the saddle, which makes an hour-long run seem brief. And swimming reminds me that I’m not just lungs and legs, and it teaches the importance of rhythm. Kayaking does wonders for a stiff mid-back, which, in turn, pays dividends in running. And hiking does a lot more than boost leg strength: it also hones balance and promotes nimble feet.

Plenty of studies show that replacing some running with cross-training does not dent your fitness. And one study found that replacing all runs with aqua jogging for four weeks allowed runners to maintain their VO_2 max.

In a recent interview, Gerard Hartmann, a sports physiotherapist whose clients have included 61 Olympic champions, gave some startling advice to the average runner: cut your mileage in half and spend the time doing circuit training, Pilates and yoga. ‘I advise maybe 40 minutes of jogging a week, two hours of strength and conditioning, circuit training and a



yoga class, or at least 15 minutes of stretching every week,’ he told the *Irish Independent* newspaper.

Such extreme advice stems from years of treating injured runners who, Hartmann says, are pushing themselves too hard – running too far on hard surfaces without the requisite strength or flexibility to withstand it. But it also stems from a skewed perspective: after all, Hartmann sees runners who are injured, not ones who are healthy. To me, capping your running at 40 minutes a week sounds like health and safety gone mad.

But I appreciate his point about the perils of being a one-trick pony. My coaching experience backs it up. A couple of years ago, two runners I was coaching got injured during marathon training. One did

the cross-training I prescribed and said – post-PB – that he felt it had contributed to his success. The other client persisted in running through his pain and ended up not making the start line.

Matt Fitzgerald, running coach and author of *80/20 Running*, believes all runners should include at least one weekly aerobic cross-training activity in their schedule. ‘Runners who make cross-training part of their normal routine are more prepared physically and psychologically to fall back on an alternative form of exercise in times of crisis,’ he says.

I agree. Just as you’re liable to order chips from a menu that presents you with the choice of chips or nothing, you’re going to choose running if you need to train and the only other option is rest. Even when, like chips for breakfast, it’s not a sensible choice.

‘On the psychological side, runners who only cross-train when they are injured have a greater tendency to run when they shouldn’t,’ says Fitzgerald. ‘Lacking a fallback option, they try to push through pain instead of taking the cautious route and cross-training instead.’

And the more varied your menu, the better. Nowadays, I plan my training around running, but if there’s a reason why running isn’t the best idea – perhaps it’s slippery underfoot, or I’ve got a niggle, or my body just doesn’t feel like pounding the pavements that day – I swap it for something else, such as swimming, yoga, spinning, cycling, hiking, gym training, kayaking...

I’m finding the benefits go way further than merely the physical. Changing, rather than curtailing, your exercise regime makes you feel empowered and resourceful. It allows you to relax the reins and respond to the needs of your body and mind at any given time. And, best of all, it ensures that every run you do is a happy one.

Speedy
stat

17

The percentage of women who said that breast size, movement or discomfort was a barrier to engaging in physical activity

● Sam Murphy tweets
@SamMurphyRuns



'The marathon often has the last word'

As the end of a running year approaches I summon up the courage to look in the mirror, post-shower, for a brief inventory: Urgh! It's not a pretty sight.

The mirror shows a gnarly old dog, a 46-year-old man who's run a lot, drank a lot and driven a lot, but who has never done Pilates and who actively ridicules yoga. My right shoulder is slightly higher than the left and my moob battle is ongoing. There's also a slight hernia on my left side and, rather alarmingly, a hard, triangular, bulbous growth on the top right side of my foot. I'm only sharing this grisly news with you because I'm planning to run another marathon – one last hurrah.

My conundrum is that I still feel I can get faster. No, no, hear me out. My fastest marathon was 3:07, in 2005 – a long time ago. It was achieved on an average of 25 miles a week. What this tells me is that I was very fit back then. I was also 35, which is still two years younger than Carlos Lopes was when he won the Los Angeles Olympic marathon in 1984. Meanwhile, the marathon world record for the over-45s is 2:14, set by Kenyan Jackson Kipngok. The records don't indicate if he is partial to Jaffa Cakes, which I am. In fact, the list of hurdles militating against my athletic goal is long: too many late nights, too much cheese and wine, no stretching and no strength work. Without the running I'd be a slob; with it I'm fit-ish – but still a slob.

The big question is this: can I start it all again? Am I willing to patch myself up, sort out my hernia, get that weird thing chopped off my foot, do a few press-ups, write a decent running schedule and also keep to it? Can I then commit to the hard miles, the easy miles, the long reps, the hills?

There are two broad approaches to the marathon, both of which are equally valid. There's running to finish it and running to achieve a certain time. In my last marathon, low on miles and with a fairly chaotic home life, I set off slowly and enjoyed it – and ran a 3:22. That was three years ago. The truth is, every marathon is a story. Every one tells you something about yourself. It's impossible to run through miles 19-24 in the midst of such exhaustion and euphoria without being changed as a person. It's a pain, a pleasure and a privilege that can't help but break you and also open up new possibilities in life, the universe and everything.

So, stick or twist? Once a time goal is desired, along comes goal pace and stress and, of course, the chance of setting off too fast. My mind turns to my last London Marathon. On the bus on the way there I met a lovely fellow. He was 47 and in the form of his life, averaging 65-70 miles a week for the last few months and confident of a sub-three finish. The depth of his marathon preparation was impressive; he had a clarity of focus that contrasted sharply with mine.

Runnerpedia

Talk test (n)

A run in the company of someone who will not shut up

Later that day I saw him in the post-race zombie walk to the Tube. He'd set off too fast, cracked at about 21 miles and stumbled in at 3:35. The marathon, we agreed, often has the last word. He'd felt a profound tiredness in his legs, as if the unpleasant effects of all the marathons he'd ever run had joined forces in a resounding negative and stymied him. He reckoned he'd aged 20 years in the final five miles (which made his time very respectable for the over 65s).

I'm running London and I have decisions to make. I'll need to train smart – more miles, long reps, regular Parkruns, 10-milers and half marathons. But the non-running stuff is also crucial. Can I do the little things? Walk past Oddbins? Skip the biscuits? And do all of this in February, which is, with respect to TS Eliot, the cruellest month?

Who knows. I've been off the booze for five days already and yesterday I had two Jaffa Cakes, instead of my usual four to six. And while I was waiting for the kettle to boil I did some press-ups. I'm going large for this one.

● Paul Tonkinson is a standup comedian who spends his time running and philosophising



'Sports do not build character. They reveal it.'

John Wooden, basketball coach

'Victory isn't defined by wins or losses. It is defined by effort. If you can say, 'I did the best I could, I gave everything I had,' you're a winner.'

Wolfgang Schadler, three-time Olympian

'Sport is a bare canvas to which we present ourselves... fully, completely and exquisitely.'

Dr Carole Oglesby, sports psychologist

'Sport is quite a simple thing. It is play, and in play, people of all ages find the chance to engage their most profound emotions.'

Timothy Shriver, Chair, Special Olympics

Think inside the box





**RUN
RECORDER
DO NOT
OPEN**

**A SHIFT IN MINDSET CAN TAKE YOUR RUNNING TO THE
NEXT LEVEL: IT'S TIME TO BECOME A BLACK BOX THINKER**



The idea of learning from your mistakes may sound like a cliché, the kind of glib adage you'd expect to hear from abundantly sideburned 1970s football managers. And let's be honest, how many of us can say we genuinely use our failures as tools for learning?

How often have you meticulously, dispassionately sifted through the wreckage of a disastrous run, isolating what precisely went wrong before formulating a plan to correct the issue? And how often have you put it down to 'just one of those days' and quickly buried the unpleasant memory as deep in the lowest reaches of your grey matter as you could possibly shove it? This may have been a mistake.

For his latest book, *Black Box Thinking: the Surprising Truth about Success*, Olympian and award-winning author Matthew Syed studied how successful individuals and organisations deal with – and bounce back from – major setbacks, looking everywhere from the aviation industry and healthcare, to education and, of course, sport.

He did so to investigate the theory that successful individuals and organisations have a healthy and robust attitude to mistakes and what's known in business parlance as 'sub-optimal outcomes'. According to Syed and this Black Box Thinking theory, failure, if harnessed correctly, can provide the surest path to success. And the good news is that he believes running is ideally suited to benefit from the application of Black Box Thinking.

Ditch the ego

Black Box Thinking begins with the notion that the key to success is a positive attitude to failure, interrogating errors as part of a future strategy for improvement. 'It's about trying to improve by looking at the gap between what you currently understand about a problem and what you could understand by leveraging the information contained in the gap,' says Syed. 'Keep narrowing that gap between where you are now and where you could potentially be.'

The first step in the process of embracing Black Box Thinking is overcoming ego; only then can you explore the theory's more sophisticated aspects. 'If you are used to succeeding and your ego is bound up in your success, failure can feel pretty devastating because you haven't learned the psychological tools to engage with failure to help you improve,' says Syed.

He contends that in our running, as in our general lives, our egos tend to make it difficult for us to admit our mistakes and accept our failures. 'We are worried about the external repercussions. What that means is that we push the information about our mistakes deeper underground and conceal it. That's a massive problem.'

The good news for runners is that Syed believes ego is less of a barrier in sport than in other walks of life. 'Ego is significant in sport,' he says 'but people find it more difficult to spin their errors. Winning and losing is clear data, so the clarity of the data has a very profound effect in reducing the danger of ego from spinning mistakes. There's a good relationship between clarity of data and people having the right mindset. Eventually you will



confront a realisation. That's why I love sport, because ego can't stand in the way too long.' For many of us, it's hard to see past the negative aspects of failure, but embracing the label and even broadening its definition increases our opportunity for improvement. Most failure can be given a makeover, notes Syed, yet forward-thinking organisations have a system geared to take advantage of these learning opportunities. 'Only by redefining failure will we unleash progress, creativity and resilience,' he says.

Learn from everything

To demonstrate the point, Syed highlights differing attitudes to failure between the aviation and healthcare industries. 'In aviation, they learn every day,' he says. 'It's not just the accidents – 99.9 per cent of aviation mistakes don't lead to accidents, but even those tiny near-miss events are big learning opportunities.' The aviation rulebook is based on lessons learned from every incident, however small. Consequently, the accident rate for major carriers in 2014 was just one in every 8.3 million take-offs.

Failure in healthcare, however, is stigmatised. Mistakes are erased in a culture of fear, blame and repercussions; as a result, the system stagnates. Syed found that in the US, preventable medical error in hospitals was the third-biggest cause of death – the equivalent of two 747s crashing daily. And it has been estimated that 12,000 deaths a year are preventable in NHS hospitals.

Syed highlights one healthcare success story in which a shift to a Black Box-oriented approach to error transformed performance. Replicating an initiative implemented in Japan on the Toyota production line, staff at Seattle's Virginia Mason hospital were encouraged to file 'Patient Safety Alerts' when they spotted an error. The hospital could then make small but crucial amendments to everything from prescription to care protocol.

The results were startling: Virginia Mason is now regarded as one of the safest hospitals in the world and has seen a 74 per cent reduction in liability insurance premiums.

Put into a running context, that means it's not just the devastation of, say, failing to finish a marathon that should be fed into the Black

Box for analysis; it's every aspect of every session in which the result is 'sub-optimal'. Don't let your ego or negative associations with the word put you off broadening what you define as a 'failure'. Such failures shouldn't be defined and judged purely on severity. Even missing a split target during a training run can be significant and should always be seen as a learning opportunity.

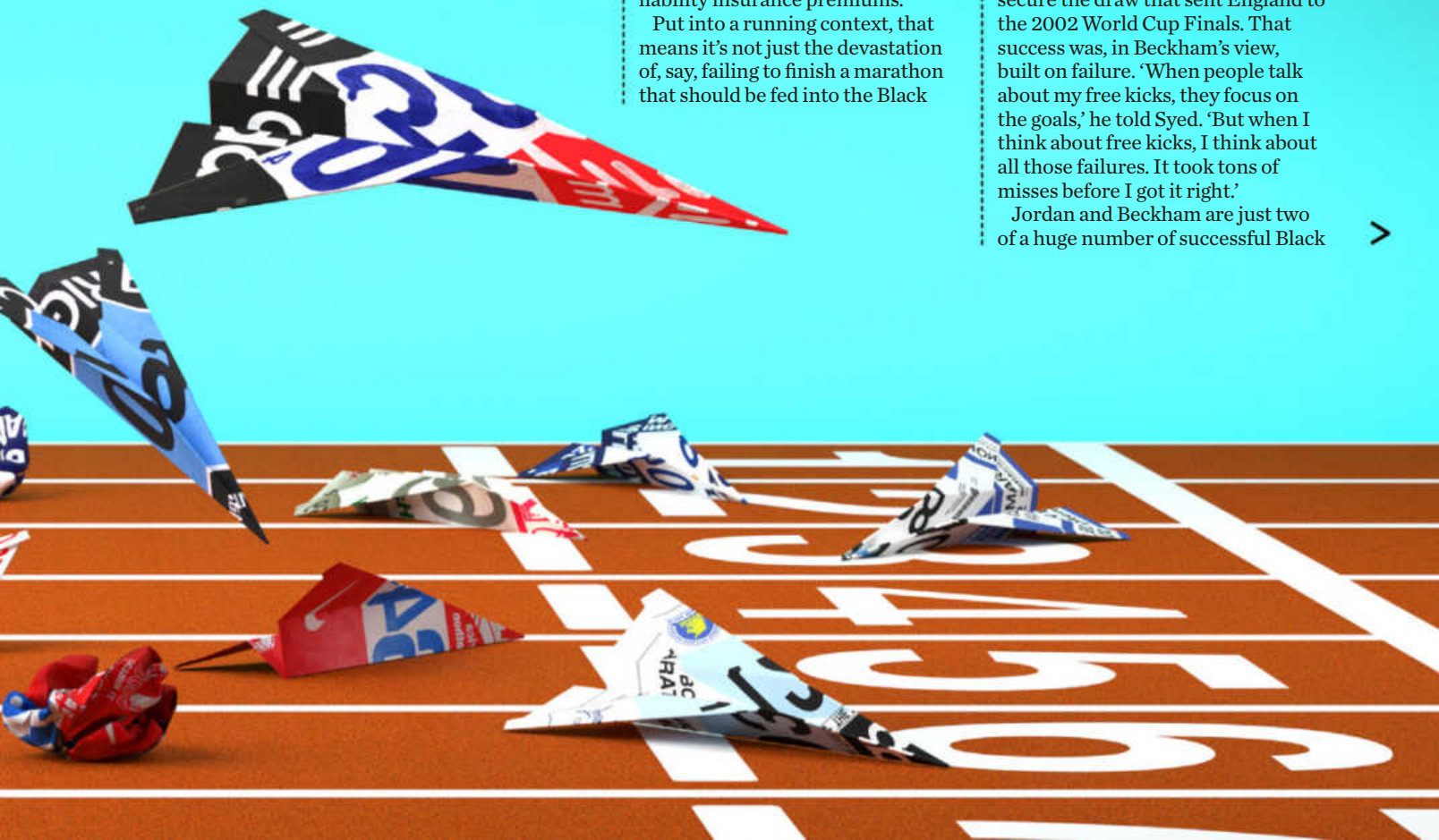
According to Syed, leading Black Box Thinkers know how vital failure is to their success, and they're comfortable recasting those failures in a positive light. 'I've missed more than 9,000 shots,' Michael Jordan said in a famous Nike ad. 'I've lost almost 300 games. Twenty six times I've been trusted to take the game-winning shot and missed.'

Another prime Black Box Thinker Syed admires is David Beckham. Vilified after his sending off against Argentina in the 1998 World Cup, Beckham worked to redeem himself and three years later he scored the last-gasp free kick against Greece to secure the draw that sent England to the 2002 World Cup Finals. That success was, in Beckham's view, built on failure. 'When people talk about my free kicks, they focus on the goals,' he told Syed. 'But when I think about free kicks, I think about all those failures. It took tons of misses before I got it right.'

Jordan and Beckham are just two of a huge number of successful Black

I've missed more than 9,000 shots,' Michael Jordan said

SUPER FLY
Your errors can put you on the path to success



> Box Thinkers in the sporting world. 'Take Rory McIlroy,' says Syed. 'The first time he was in with a chance of a Major, leading the Masters in Augusta (2011), he fell apart. He had a horrible round and started hitting the ball all over the place. Watching the recording back, he saw he was rushing shots and wasn't relaxed.'

'So McIlroy created a psychological strategy based on what he learned from that catastrophic final round. He decided that if he was ever again in the lead of a big tournament, he would talk to his caddie between shots, chat about football and life in general. Then, 30 seconds before the shot, he would arrow in. This would mean he'd have no time to panic. He won the next major title. That's a Black Box Thinking approach.'

Marginal gains

Once you have redefined 'failures' as opportunities to improve, it's time to get scientific. Painstakingly deconstructing performance down to each integral component to unearth deficiencies is known as the 'marginal gains' approach, which was famously implemented by Sir Dave Brailsford as he led British Cycling and Team Sky to global domination. 'In sport, marginal gains, that basic idea of having a very big problem and breaking it down into small parts to establish what's working and what isn't, is most significant,' says Syed.

From making sure their cyclists slept on the same mattress each night, to reducing infection risks by using antibacterial hand gel, and vacuuming hotel rooms prior to the arrival of their riders, Team Sky's attention to the detail of each component added up to significant improvement. As Brailsford said to Syed, 'Each step may be small, but the aggregation can be huge. We were getting a deeper understanding of each aspect of performance. It was the difference between trailing behind the rest of the world and coming first.'

For example, say you run a good 10K time, but your split for the final mile was your slowest; in that case a dissection of your marginal gains could make your next 10K time a great one. Find out what caused the

'It's not only your own mistakes you can learn from'

slowdown by interrogating everything from a change in routine, to your warm-up and pacing, to lack of concentration, poor hydration, diet, fatigue or form adjustments you made owing to injury. 'People think it's exhausting to think about success at such a high level of detail,' Brailsford told Syed, 'but it would be far more exhausting to neglect doing the analysis. I would much rather have clear answers.'

Numbers game

With running so rich in data availability – from distance and splits, to speed and heart rate – systematic performance analysis may seem a daunting task. But Syed emphasises that we're privileged to have such crucial data. 'It just gives you more opportunities to build,' he says. 'It's better to understand the problem and to be able to build up systematically. In running and cycling the clear and objective metrics make it much easier to deconstruct the numbers to learn.'



CRASH AND LEARN
It's not about
falling, it's about
getting back up

Words **Nick Dines** Illustrations **Spooky Pooka**

BECOME A BLACK BOX THINKER

01/

PARK THE EGO

Your ego is your biggest barrier to harnessing the power of Black Box Thinking. Don't let it prevent you embracing and learning from failure.

02/

SEE THE BIG PICTURE

But don't get so caught up amending one specific area that you neglect other factors. Be strategic.

03/

LEARN FROM OTHERS, TOO

If you're open to it, the social dynamic of a running group allows you to learn from others' setbacks as well as your own.

04/

USE 'FAILURE'

Don't bracket mistakes by severity. Missing a split target

by a few seconds is as much a key learning opportunity as assessing a mid-race withdrawal.

05/

EMBRACE DATA

As a runner, you're privileged to have potential access to huge amounts of extremely precise data. Embrace it and the gadgets that collect it. The more you have, the more opportunity you have to improve.

06/

TRY AGAIN, AND AGAIN

Put lessons learned into practice frequently, getting swift feedback from every experience to increase learning and motivation. And don't be afraid to experiment. If you fail, it will be a learning opportunity; you'll improve from it, so recalibrate and go again.

07/

WORK IN THE MARGINS

Analyse your performance down to each component, no matter how minor. Marginal gains combine to produce a cumulative, game-changing effect.

08/

GET SOME PROSPECTIVE

Use 'pre-mortems' to explore why a running plan may fail before you start. Analyse why issues such as conditions, warm-up, kit and hydration might result in failure.

09/

BE RESILIENT

Understand that numerous failures will take place before a target is reached. Recognise that it's resilience in the face of failure that will ultimately get you there.

related problems. 'If you can create a social dynamic where people are sharing best practices, or what went wrong, you'll learn from the feedback others are getting, as well as your own,' says Syed.

Being part of a group of runners can also help you utilise another facet of Black Box Thinking, the pre-mortem. This concept, which explores why a plan may go wrong before it's put into action, encourages individuals to voice concerns, as opposed to stewing over them internally for fear of sounding negative.

For runners, this may mean potential hurdles, such as problematic weather conditions, fatigue, a lingering niggle, hydration or even kit scenarios that could lead to failure. Syed discovered that taking this approach increases by 30 per cent people's ability to identify the

reasons for future outcomes. While analysing performance in detail is an effective technique, you must be aware that insight often also means taking a step back and seeing the big picture. As a Black Box Thinker, you can't allow your focus on one component to become detrimental to another. For example, ignoring a nagging injury to do extra speedwork so you can develop a PB-grabbing finishing kick is a bad idea.

'That's very important,' says Syed. 'Where you concentrate and isolate one effect, the problem is you forget about others. You need to be strategic. Black Box Thinking requires a patient understanding of specific issues, but without neglecting the bigger picture. Is it about the big picture or the small picture? It has to be about both.' Syed sees elements of this bigger picture element of Black Box Thinking in his

analysis of Dame Kelly Holmes' achievements at the 2004 Olympic Games, where she took gold in the 800m and 1500m. 'Kelly had suffered injury after injury,' says Syed. 'And most of her injuries were caused because she was such a competitive person and wanted to train hard. But she recognised that her ambition was holding her back because she was overtraining and breaking her body. Ignoring injuries, a stress fracture or a bad back would then ruin her season. In 2004, she had injuries, yet she recalibrated, trained smarter, focused more on nutrition and slept better, so she had a different approach before winning those golds.' That, again, is Black Box Thinking in action.

Beyond fear

Interestingly, research shows that very young children have no fear of failure at all. Negative attitudes to failure develop as we get older. They are honed in our schools and once with us they're hard to shift. But that doesn't mean you can't apply Black Box Thinking as you get older. 'You can get everybody over to the Black Box side,' says Syed. 'There's no age barrier to start learning from errors. In fact it's probably smarter to be a Black Box Thinker as you get older, figuring out how to adapt one's training to the constraints placed upon it by an ageing body.'

For Syed, if there's one figure who epitomises the power of Black Box Thinking, it's inventor James Dyson. What many people don't realise, Syed explains, is that Dyson was not the first person to come up with the concept of the cyclone vacuum cleaner. But he was the one with the resilience to learn from multiple failures until a solution emerged. 'It's those individuals or institutions that are capable of learning from mistakes that succeed in the most incredible way,' says Syed. 'James Dyson had 5,126 prototypes that failed. It was the 5,127th that succeeded. That isn't a problem unique to vacuum cleaners, that's how success happens in every walk of life – tweaking, failing, learning and changing before eventually getting there.'

Black Box Thinking: the Surprising Truth about Success, (John Murray, £20, hardback) is out now and is also available as an ebook.

And running has another advantage when it comes to the application of Black Box Thinking: we can do it frequently. 'In certain areas of life, the relationship between an action and its consequences are very delayed, so you don't get that swift feedback and don't learn as fast. The joy of running is that you can receive quick feedback from every run. As soon as you've finished you can analyse what worked and what didn't, and think, "What can I tweak?"'. Then, whether it's a race or a weekend long run, there are opportunities to put issues right. Instant reward and gratification also help runners move onwards, fuelling motivation and banishing failures to the past.'

It's not only your own mistakes and experiments that you can learn from. Members of running clubs and groups can consult one another to discuss



play fast and loose

Adding a little playfulness to your running could boost your performance, reignite your mojo and set you off on a grand adventure



At last, the week is over: you worked like a dog to meet your monthly sales target, spent hours poring over

spreadsheets and had to race through a report to meet an insane deadline. But now it's time for your evening run: progressively speedy mile reps, hitting sub-sevens by the end. And then there's the 18-miler you've scheduled for Sunday.

Ever feel there's no let-up in your life? That it's *all* about timescales and targets, data and deadlines? It might be time to try a more playful, less regimented approach to running. You won't be alone. There's a growing consensus among exercise experts that putting playfulness at the heart of physical activity is the key to making it more purposeful, fun and sustainable.

'As a species we are fundamentally equipped for, and need, active play throughout our lifespan,' says Dr Stuart Brown, an expert on the science of play and author of *Play: How it Shapes the Brain, Opens the Imagination and Invigorates the Soul* (Penguin Putnam).

Chris McDougall, whose bestselling book *Born to Run* helped spark the barefoot-running craze, believes we have our priorities fundamentally wrong when it comes to exercise: 'We need to figure out what we really mean when we talk about getting 'better' at running,' he says. 'Is the goal to get faster at the risk of burning out or getting injured? Or is it the ability to exercise every day for years on end and enjoy it so much that you can't wait for the

next run? To me, there's no question which is going to be the more successful and fulfilling approach.'

At one time, the main 'purpose' of play was believed to be its role as a mechanism for developing the skills in childhood that we would need in adult life. But neuroscientists are discovering that putting away childish things once we grow up isn't such a good idea after all. New research shows that play is a way of building and shaping the regions of the brain concerned with emotion, motivation and reward. It helps to develop links between the brain, the body and the social and physical environment. And that's why bringing play into exercise can be so powerful.

It's something that Tara Wood, founder of Wildfitness (wildfitness.com), has been doing for years. The company offers courses in Crete, Andalucia and Zanzibar to help us 'zoo humans' 'rewild' ourselves through

natural movement, eating and thinking. 'We've found that play increases our clients' capacity for physical movement,' she says. 'People can run faster and be more coordinated and agile in a play situation than in a more formal exercise context.' Why? 'Because they are more connected and engaged,' she says. 'If you make movement mundane, or just about calories burned, you miss out on all the ways it can enrich you.'

ALL WORK AND...

McDougall agrees. 'Nearly all forms of exercise come with this phony sense of competition. We line up for races and push ourselves harder than we should. Or we go to the gym and set the treadmill too steep or stack too much weight on the bench press, all to show that we're 'working' and not 'playing.' We've stigmatised play as frivolous, but I don't think I've ever exercised harder in my life than when I was playing 'Murder Tag' in my Philadelphia neighbourhood, aged seven, running sprints for hours until it was too dark to see. It was playful, it was fun and it was purely self-regulated: you ran when you wanted, rested when you were tired and did it all from a sense of joy instead of obligation.'

The words we use to describe our running – *workout*, *speedwork*,

effort, *regime* – make it sound more chore than pleasure. You could argue it's just terminology, but as Dan Edwardes, director at Parkour Generations (parkourgenerations.com) observes: 'Terminology creates the state of mind and vice versa. If you use those words, then you think that way and act that way, so you are more likely to experience movement as hard work.'

Parkour and freerunning have seen rapid growth over the past decade, with many former gym junkies and yes, runners, discovering the joys of 'playing' their way through the urban environment. There has also been a resurgence among adults in activities such as trampolining, group skipping, hula-hooping and skateboarding. And the growth of less PB-focused, more fun-filled races like Zombie Runs, Color Runs and obstacle races suggests that many of us may be yearning to put a little more fun, more adventure, in our running.

The benefits of doing so could be significant: 'There is a great deal of evidence that joyful, playful exercise works,' says Dr Brown. 'If you can balance a high cardiac output with having fun you're likely to get far more out of the whole experience, better brain connectivity, stress relief and socialisation.'

SIMPLE PLEASURES

For many, putting the pleasure back into exercise means rediscovering natural movement. 'If you want to know how we are meant to move, in terms of our evolution and general health, just watch children at play,' says Edwardes. 'You won't see them running in straight lines for hours, or doing repetitions of isolated movements – they'll be running, jumping, climbing, crawling and doing it all seamlessly. To use sports science terminology, the children are engaging in non-linear, multi-planar, complex and dynamic movement patterns. And that's what best feeds the human body in terms of movement, so that's what we should be encouraging.'

But what if you have no desire to jump, climb, swing or crawl? What if you're perfectly happy running in straight lines, or around ovals?

Ben Medder (benmedder.com), a MovNat (natural movement) coach who teaches outdoor fitness classes in natural environments, believes it's as much to do with mindset as activity choice. 'For some, a tough workout as part of a regime is

JUMP FOR JOY
For runners, staying in shape doesn't mean always sticking to the straight and narrow

Words **Sam Murphy** Photography (previous and final page) **Andy Day, kiell.com** (this page) **Tom Miles**



‘As a species, we are equipped for, and need, active play throughout our lifespan’

‘I’m running again and my body feels a lot stronger’

THERESA SCHEEL, 33, COPENHAGEN

‘A few years back I took up running and started doing 5K and 10K races. I enjoyed it, but wasn’t really improving and got bored. I felt something was missing from my training. Initially I tried triathlon but I got bored of that, too. All three disciplines were very focused on distance and speed and it was socially isolating. Then I tried Ben Medder’s outdoor natural movement classes, which encourage play, movement creativity and individuality. We’d do anything from climbing trees to crawling, gymnastic strength and partner games. As well as being outdoors, it was a very different way of moving from the linear patterns of running. I trained with Ben for about a year, during which I did very little running. I’m now running again and my body feels a lot stronger as a result of my natural movement training. I also appreciate my running more now and have a more relaxed mindset. I recently did an uphill-only race in the Swiss Alps. Great fun! I feel I don’t have to train as much to get the same results that I had to work harder for 18 months ago. And I look forward to each run now – it feels like a treat.’





genuinely fun – it's still play – and pleasure-driven,' he says. 'The runner is not just doing it to achieve an external goal, but to experience the pleasure in the present. For others, the pleasure doesn't come directly from the act of running but, rather, from the effects and results the work will have in the future. For example, doing speedwork leads to a better capacity to enjoy running, giving you a better engine to go and play or race freely.'

The problem arises, he says, when running is seen as a chore, an obligation or even a punishment; something that has to be done to combat laziness or to achieve an aesthetic goal or a specific outcome. 'Play,' on the other hand, helps us engage with a task,' says Medder. To put that mindset in slightly more adult terminology, a study in the journal *BMC Public Health* found that 'openness to experience' was a key attitude linked to likelihood of being physically active, while being adventurous correlated with activity lasting into old age.

EXPERT THINKING

Playfulness as experimentation is something Jae Gruenke (balancedrunner.com), a running form expert and Feldenkrais practitioner also advocates. 'Feldenkrais is an experiential method of learning that reproduces the processes we use as infants,' she explains. The aim is to improve physical function and reduce limitations or pain connected to movement. 'Play is of tremendous significance. When we learn to walk, a vast number of explorations and experiments, not necessarily directed at the 'goal' of walking, eventually lead to walking. The same is true for a runner trying to improve their running in adulthood.'

Gruenke, a former professional dancer, began applying Feldenkrais to running 15 years ago. 'I'd taken up running because I needed more stamina for a particular role, and it made me mad that it felt so horrendous. I'd just enrolled to train as a Feldenkrais practitioner, so I decided to make it my laboratory, too. I would run before and after sessions to see what had changed. I had some amazing eureka moments. It felt like having a wall removed from in front of me that I had never known was even there.'

Gruenke now teaches other runners to find fluidity and freedom in their running. 'Many runners

PLAY AWAY

How to add a sense of play to your running

Leave technology at home. Lose the watch and ditch the music so you can engage with what you're doing. 'If you do listen to music, at least sing along, or do some dance steps as you run,' says Medder.

Vary your playground. 'A more natural environment, such as your local park, can make it easier to cultivate a playful vision, but any environment can become a playground,' says Medder. 'Run along curbs, balance on walls, hop, skip and jump over cracks in the pavement, weave in and out of bollards and lampposts. With practice, your perception of your environment changes and opportunities for play become apparent.'

Have a playful purpose. See if you can overtake another runner in the park without them knowing you're catching them or pretend you are being chased by wolves and see how quickly you can get up a tree.

Run with a playmate. Play tag and chase each other. Run only sideways or backwards. Give each other piggybacks.

come to me saying they want to learn to run 'correctly,' but the idea is fundamentally flawed. Running isn't always the same. To run 'correctly' means to run in a way that exactly meets the circumstances – speed, terrain, fatigue, wind – which means doing different things all the time. The path to good running isn't intellectual, it's physical and sensory. When people embrace play, exploration and experimentation, they become more interested in, and engaged with, the actual process of running and are no longer trying to zone out or just 'get through' their runs.'

This is the key difference between task-orientation, where you're in the moment (often described as a state of 'flow') and outcome orientation, where you just want to get to the end. The fundamental question is whether it's the run itself you enjoy, or reviewing data and stepping in the shower afterwards. As Dr Brown asks: 'Is exercise only joyful when you finish, or joyful during?'

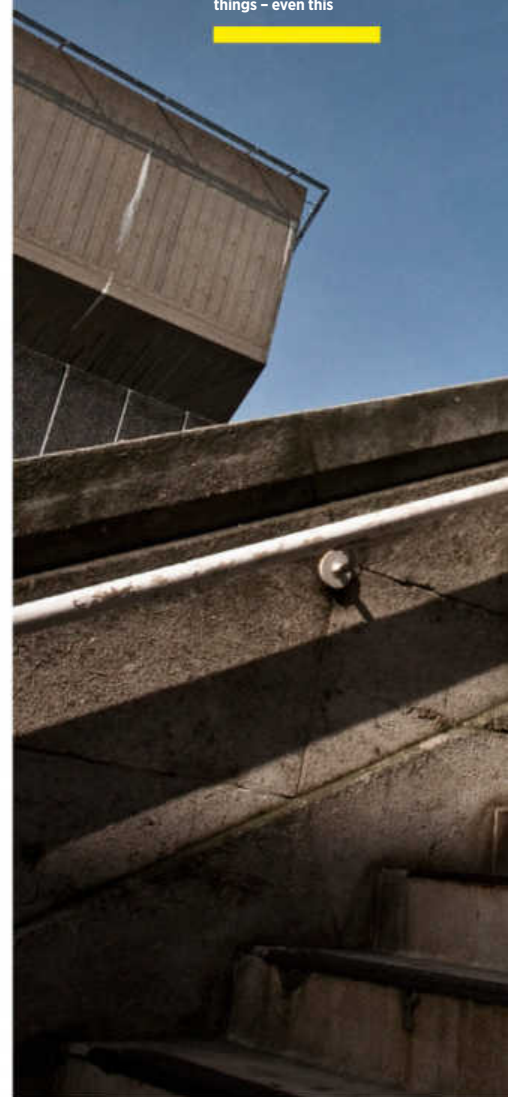
But don't think that for something to be pleasurable, it has to be easy. 'Playful or joyful doesn't mean exercise is not challenging or competitive,' says Brown. Edwardes agrees: 'Parkour training is no less disciplined, tough or effective than any other athlete's,' he says. 'But it's enjoyable and engaging for the same reasons that motivate children to play all day, because it's what our bodies are designed to be doing.'

Wood believes it's important to distinguish between pain – as in, the feeling of challenging and pushing yourself – and suffering, which is a mindset of enduring something we are not enjoying. 'Suffering kills motivation,' she says.

For Gruenke, one of the signs that a runner is 'improving' is that they 'become less compulsive about their running. They feel freer to make choices about what really is in their interest. So they become freer to deviate from a training plan when it's important to do so, freer not to finish a race if they feel it will injure them and imperil something else that matters more. And, as a result, their performance improves in whatever way really matters to them,' she says.

No-one would deny that it's commendable to have goals and to push yourself to reach them, but sometimes by being too regimented and goal driven, we lose the joy that got us lacing up our running shoes in the first place. Craving the right outcome without relishing the

FLY IN THE FACE OF GRAVITY
Adding play to your run can mean all sorts of things – even this



experience that gets us there not only detracts from the enjoyment, it's also a high-risk strategy for a long running career: if you don't get results you'll either lose interest or push too hard to get them and end up injured or burned out.

So how can you add the fun factor? Wood says that exercise offers us opportunities to express ourselves, experience mastery and connect with both nature and each other. 'We are hardwired for enjoyment,' she says. 'Joy is an ancient symptom of doing something that has an evolutionary benefit.'

We runners are ahead of the pack when it comes to getting outdoors in natural environments, and there's also a sense of being part of a bigger community or 'tribe'. Perhaps where we fall short is in self-expression –




we follow rules, stick to plans and run at set paces for set distances – rather than making it up as we go along. And that, says Brown, goes against our basic evolutionary heritage. ‘Exploration and curiosity are deeply ingrained in our psyche as hunter-gatherers,’ he says. ‘Running around a track or up and down the same streets doesn’t really satisfy these needs.’ Medder agrees: ‘Allow yourself to reconnect with your childlike curiosity and let go of regime,’ he says. ‘Make your run about play, enjoyment and embracing chaos.’

ULTIMATE PLAY

Runners have a vague idea of what a fartlek entails. But few put it into practice in its true meaning – ‘speed play’ – where reps go out the window and you’re governed by your mood, running partners or environment. It’s the ultimate running playtime. ‘Fartlek is a great way to cultivate a playful mindset,’ says Medder. ‘Not that play always has to be unstructured, but it can be easier to initially let go of structure which so often brings with it the not-so-playful terminology and mindset.’

Perhaps you’re having fun on the run already. You feel engaged. In that case there may be *performance* benefits to be had from getting playful. Gruenke says her clients report that not only does their running feel easier and more pleasurable, they’re also running faster. McDougall, who continues to embrace barefoot running and also practises parkour-style natural movement, says he’s never felt fitter in his life. ‘Anything you enjoy, you’ll continue to do better. You will devote yourself to it with complete absorption,’ he says.

For Medder, there’s a balance to be struck between the traditional approach to running and what he describes as a more ‘romantic’ or playful attitude. ‘Keep the discipline and structure that is the nature of a training session with a specific, quantifiable goal in mind, but also ensure that you run for the hell of it sometimes, with childlike glee. This way, you get to progress towards your goals and still play,’ he says. ‘If you can balance the sense of effort with enjoyment, you’re on to a winner.’ Amen to that. 

‘Playful or joyful doesn’t mean exercise is not challenging’

‘It was like having permission to play’

JONATHAN MCHAFFIE, 44, EDINBURGH

‘I trained for my first marathon a few months after taking up running. It became less fun with a plan – it was just hard work and I had the sense it wasn’t meant to be like that. When I read *Born to Run*, it reaffirmed for me that running isn’t all about paces and times, but I didn’t know how to change what I was doing. Then I took part in a ‘taster’ Feldenkrais workshop with Jae Gruenke and



felt the difference instantly. Over a series of lessons I began to unravel the poor movement habits I’d picked up. I learned things about how my body moved, how running could feel so much easier and Jae encouraged me to experiment, to see what felt right. It was like having permission to play with my running. I was still training hard, but I was enjoying it again. Conditions for my second marathon were far from ideal, but I had a smile on my face, or at least inside; I knocked 50 minutes off my time.’

‘It gave me a great sense of freedom’

FRANCOIS MAHOP, 41, REIGATE, SURREY

‘I’ve always run. In my 20s I qualified for the French national team in the 400m, and I was in the same athletics club as Sebastian Foucan [who performed the parkour sequence in the Bond movie *Casino Royale*]. One day we got chatting about parkour and he invited me to a session. I loved it and I realised I’d been doing parkour since childhood – playing in the forest, jumping



from rock to rock, climbing, rolling, balancing. Parkour teaches you to be focused and uses the whole body. You work in different planes, which gives you a better awareness of your body. You work on balance, agility and coordination. Now when I run, sometimes I’ll just do 10K straight but mostly I put in a few challenges, like running along a wall without breaking my stride. I’m engaged physically and mentally and it gives me a great sense of freedom. I use running and parkour as tools to play.’

One

A complete rundown
of the wonders worked
on our brains by the
simple act of propelling
ourselves forward.
From the initial hit
of the endorphin
high to stimulating
your creativity and
concentration, all the
way to warding off
dementia, this is why
running matters to
your grey matter



track mind >



Smarten up

Big meeting in the diary? Get your running shoes. Going for a run was found to **improve reasoning ability** by US researchers from the University of Illinois, while a study at National Taiwan Sport University has pinpointed 30 minutes of moderate exercise as the ideal duration and intensity to **optimise cognitive performance** immediately afterwards. But you may not have to wait until you're done to reap the rewards, as recent University of Aberdeen research found that the act of running **triggers creative thinking**. According to the researchers, the mechanism at work here is that your brain associates forward motion with the future. The study also found that to maximise the effect you should stick to a route you know well, so worrying about directions doesn't limit your mind's capacity to wander. Also, keep the effort easy, as maintaining speed and tracking splits will divert brain power away from creativity.

Get high

If your sweat-elevated smarts aren't enough to put a smile on your face, then perhaps the fabled runner's high will do the trick. German research has traced the effect to regions of the brain **releasing natural opiates** as we run. (These regions also become active in response to emotions such as love.) Other studies have shown the sweet spot for endorphin production is a comfortably hard effort (think tempo run), while research at Oxford University found exercising in groups could increase endorphin release.

And there's more bliss-inducing chemistry bubbling away; running also triggers your brain to release substances called endocannabinoids, **which promote feelings of calm**. Challenging but not all-out efforts (70-85 per cent of maximum heart rate) are the key to this drawer in your brain's natural pharmacy.

Stay happy

Unlike other chemical shortcuts to happiness, pounding the pavement doesn't come with a comedown. In fact, research shows that regular running reduces stress and elevates mood over the long term. A study published in *Medicine & Science in Sports & Exercise* identified increased levels of tryptophan in runners – elevated tryptophan is typically

paralleled by **increased levels of the mood-elevating neurotransmitter serotonin**. Another study, published in the *Journal of Sports Medicine and Physical Fitness*, found physical activity helped to lower patients' score on the Depression, Anxiety and Stress Scale (DASS).

Other research has found that running can be **as effective as prescription antidepressants**, (or even more so), acting in the same way as the medication by causing mood-improving neurotransmitters such as serotonin and norepinephrine to stay in the system for longer.

Beat cravings

Mental visions of post-run pasta may power you through your miles, but on a brain-chemistry level running can actually aid the systems that prevent you from overindulging. A study at the University of Western Australia found intense interval training was most effective in regulating appetite. The researchers think this could be down to exercise **curtailing production of 'the hunger hormone', ghrelin**.

Other studies have shown working out in the heat is more effective in reducing appetite, so if curbing calorie intake is high on your priority list, consider the treadmill on winter days. If your vices go beyond the biscuit tin, there's more good news: when scanning smokers' brains, University of Plymouth researchers found that **areas associated with addiction showed less activity post-exercise**.

Memory jog

One particular area of the brain where a wealth of research has established the potential benefits of running is the hippocampus, which is associated with learning and memory. One such study, conducted by Japanese researchers and published in the *International Journal of Sports Medicine*, showed regular moderate exercise **improved hippocampus-related memory** in rats but, interestingly, rodents who picked up the intensity and did all their running faster than lactate threshold pace didn't do any better in memory tests than a sedentary control group. The scientists put this down to the stress of consistent hard training diverting the rats' physiological resources to recovery rather than buffing up brain systems, and they believe the same would hold true in humans.

Worth the weight?

How strength training may give you a brain lift

There is plenty of literature on the effects of aerobic training on brain health. There is far less on strength training, but research suggests it, too, may benefit cognitive function. Research from the University of Montreal and the University of Poitiers, found that aerobic and strength training help the brain through two distinct and independent chemical mechanisms, both of which have a positive effect on neuron growth and survival. In the case of strength training, the improvement is due to increased levels of insulin-like growth factor 1 (IGF-1). So the weights room in the gym may not be entirely full of narcissistic meatheads, after all.

The brain drain

Why a tired mind saps your running

Clocking the miles may be a perfect prescription for your grey matter, but putting your mind through a tough workout beforehand won't help your run. A study published in *Medicine & Science in Sports & Exercise* found that when participants were asked to perform a challenging mental test designed to induce mental fatigue before a run, they selected slower, lower-intensity paces and their ratings of perceived exertion were significantly higher compared



KEEP TAKING
THE TABLETS
Run to stay at
your sharpest

with those who watched a documentary that was not mentally taxing. If you have a hard session coming up, it might be an idea to go easy on the pre-run quantum physics.

Bottling up your emotions could also be bad news for your running performance. In another study, when volunteers were asked to

hide their emotions while being shown a three-minute video designed to elicit disgust, they slowed by over three per cent in a time trial, and reported higher perceived effort. It seems the effort of suppressing natural emotional responses created mental fatigue, which affected their physical performance.

Build brain power...

Running does more than keep your existing grey matter well oiled; it could also trigger the **growth of new brain tissue**. Exercise drives the growth of new nerve cells (neurogenesis) and blood vessels (angiogenesis), which combine to increase brain tissue volume, according to researchers at the University of Maryland, US. This is crucial, as research has shown that we begin to lose brain tissue after our late 20s. More specifically, a study published in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* found regular exercisers **increased the volume of their hippocampus** – that part of the brain linked to learning and memory – by two per cent, compared with their inactive peers. That's big news, as it was previously thought that

this region of your grey matter couldn't grow at all after childhood.


...and hold on to it

Staying fit as you age is vital in keeping your brain in good shape. A study published in *Frontiers in Aging Neuroscience* found higher cardio-respiratory fitness in older people was associated with greater activity in various areas of the brain, including a region critical for high-level cognition. And researchers at the University of Texas who found a correlation between fitness and cognitive function in middle-aged adults believe the link is at least partly down to fitness aiding **better blood flow in the brain**.

But don't start too late. Analysing data from over 1,000 men and women, Boston University School of Medicine researchers found that those who were less fit at midlife (in their 40s) had less brain tissue volume 20 years down the line. The lesson? Exercise now for better brain function later.

Long-term benefit

To reinforce that message, a growing body of research is showing that the long-term mental return on your investment in running may be to **reduce your risk of suffering from dementia**. One study, published in *Medicine and Science in Sports and Exercise*, found regular treadmill running early or late in life slowed cognitive decline and improved brain function in mice with a type of Alzheimer's. And research presented at the 2015 Alzheimer's Association International Conference found physical exercise may be an effective treatment for Alzheimer's and also **reduces psychiatric symptoms of the disease**. A study published in *The Lancet* found physical inactivity was the strongest modifiable risk factor for Alzheimer's in the UK, Europe and the US.

Much of the research has focused on the hippocampus, but running hasn't been found to only help you form memories, but also to help you **better access those memories**. Brain scans of early-stage Alzheimer's patients found those who exercised showed more activity in the caudate nucleus, a brain region that supports memory circuits. Running appears to improve the quality of the signals transmitted through those circuits. Yet another reason why running is just about the smartest move you can make. 

Forever

Y

oung

**RW's Sam
Murphy meets
Rob Young, a
man who has
rewritten the
rulebook on
how long the
human body can
keep running**



VO₂ MAX
OF 52 ML/
KG/MIN:
SUB-3.30
MARATHON
LEVEL

**EXCELLENT
HIP FLEXION**
DURING LEG
SWING

**RUNNING
ECONOMY**
IS AT THE HIGH
END FOR GOOD
RUNNERS

**GREAT
POSTURE,**
WITH NOT TOO
MUCH TRUNK
LEAN

LANDS
WITH A VERY
GENTLE,
NEARLY FLAT
FOREFOOT
STRIKE

**HIGH
CADENCE**
OF 170-180
STEPS/MIN

Thousands of people watch the London Marathon from their sofas each year and say, 'I'd like to do that one day.' And many actually do it, eventually. But there can only be one person who, the day after the 2014 race, got up at dawn, pulled on his trainers and ran his very first marathon – and then went to work. And that was just the beginning. He did the same thing the next day, and the next, and soon Rob Young – aka Marathon Man UK – was entering marathons up and down the country. By April 2015 he had run his way to a new world record by completing a staggering 370 marathons in a calendar year.

Can it really be true that this monumental endeavour started with a bet? 'Yes!' says Young, who lives in southwest London. 'Me and my partner, Joanna, had been watching the marathon on TV and I made a comment that I'd love to do it. She said, "You couldn't do that" and I said, "Of course I could!" We had a 20p bet.'

Young jokes that she's still not paid him the 20p, but it's clear he understands what he owes her. One day, she had a 'normal' partner with a regular income to help bring up their young son, Alex. The next, he was swept into a world where running takes precedence over almost everything. But we're getting ahead of ourselves...

ONE OF A KIND

I first meet Young in a London café, where his kilt (originally worn for a Parkrun and now his customary running attire) turns heads. 'I'm just a normal runner,' says the 32-year-old. Seeing my sceptical expression, he adds, 'I believe most people could do what I've done.'

Before we examine this statement let's examine exactly what Young has done. There's sheer the distance he's covered (11,700 miles in a year). And the early starts: 'In the week I'd run in the morning, between 3am and 7am,' he says. 'When I finished, I went straight to work and washed in the sink. I averaged about three hours' sleep per night.' Add to that the travelling: 'At weekends I went to wherever there was a marathon or an ultra on,' he says. 'If there wasn't an official race, I'd run the marathon course in Richmond Park – sometimes with as many as 60 people with me.' Young once ran five marathons and the North Downs Way 100-mile race in 48 hours.

And then we need to consider the remarkable pace Young has maintained in these races. In January 2015, well into his

'marathon year', he flew across the Atlantic to run the 3,100-mile Race Across America, from LA to Washington DC, which he won by 30 hours (finishing in 482 hours and 10 minutes) despite popping back mid-race to run the race that started it all. 'I had to be at the London Marathon because that was where my year officially ended.' This entailed getting on a plane fresh from back-to-back marathons, running London in 3:07, then having a shower before jumping on the back of a motorbike to Heathrow to catch a flight to Atlanta and launch back into the epic race.

Then, of course, there's the fundraising – over £70,000 so far for three children's charities. None of the money raised has been used to fund his exploits, even though he's had no sponsor for most of the year (he now has modest support from Lucozade). 'I haven't taken a cut from the charities – not a penny,' says Young.

The more you hear about Young, the harder it is to accept his assertion that he is an 'ordinary' runner. But he insists that he is, even offering advice on how anyone can run a daily marathon: 'Start by running slower than your usual marathon time,' he says. 'It takes three weeks to adapt. One more week after that, your mind will adapt, too. Once a week, push the pace a bit close to your 'real' time. Every eight to 10 days, you'll have a bad day. On the bad day, you just go a lot slower than normal.'

While Young's relentless running seems like an act of madness, there's method to it.

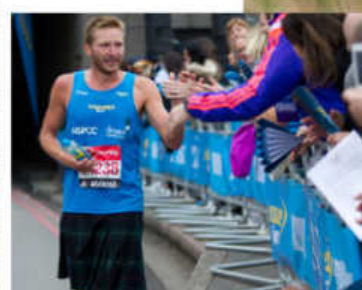
He's developed what is, for him at least, a remarkably effective strategy for serial marathoning. 'I never race a whole race,' he says. My technique is to race the first half, then slow down. I don't do negative splits or even pace. I drink energy drinks in the first half and electrolyte drinks in the second, starting my recovery along the way.

That enables me to run through the finish feeling fresh and go on to the next one.'

Sports medicine experts, intrigued by his exploits, have been monitoring Young since the early days. He is vague about their findings and confesses he's not much interested in heart rates and VO₂ maxes, but says, 'I've a body that can endure a lot more than most people. It's a new thing I've discovered I can do. I owe it to the scientists to help them understand how far the body can go – and I owe it to myself, too.'

It's evident that Young has physiological and biomechanical advantages (*The Young conundrum*, p56) for distance running. He

'I've a body that can endure a lot more than most people'



YOUNG AND RESTLESS
Main pic: Rob in Richmond Park and (top down); his first official marathon; on the North Downs Way Ultra; the end of his Race Across America; with Joanna and Alex outside the White House in Washington; and at the 2015 Virgin Money London Marathon



also developed his athletic and competitive edge in his five years in the army, and as a Junior GB duathlete and triathlete. But it would seem that where he really leaves most of us behind is in mental strength.

'The mind is everything,' he says. 'It controls the body. I get worn out, just like anyone else, but that's where the mind comes in. You can manipulate your mind to keep going longer. When I run, if I'm doing an out-and-back or a loop and runners are coming the other way, I will sing a song to them or make them laugh or lie down in front of them so they have to jump over me. By taking their minds off their running for a moment, it helps them refresh and it refreshes my mind, too.'

One of the things that have surprised Young over the last 20 months is how a solitary act such as running can bring people together. 'I thought everyone just looked after themselves, but there's a real community out there,' he says. 'People help each other, inspire each other.'

MENTAL STRENGTH

The fact that Young has become something of a piper on his many running challenges is testament to how inspiring others find him. And after a lunchtime run with him in London's Regent's Park, I can see why. He's a natural coach and motivator. As joyful as a Springer spaniel let off the lead, he runs this way and that, changing speed and direction, bantering constantly, interacting with other park users (runners and non-runners alike), and issuing challenges ('Let's catch that runner up', 'Let's make up a song') and tips ('Shake your arms out, just once'). It all somehow makes you want to do your best. And Young believes it's also a factor in him staying free from injury. 'If you just enjoy running you limit the stress on your body,' he says. 'Then injuries don't happen so often, if at all.'

It may not be a theory you'll find in a sports medicine textbook, but during his marathon year Young suffered just one injury – a stress reaction in his ankle – bad enough to put him out of action. Even then, he took only two weeks off. 'A lot of people overstress about injuries, which I think prolongs the recovery period,' he says.

But Young has an unusually high pain tolerance, which may allow him to run through niggles that would have most of us laid up with an ice pack. 'When I'm in pain, I can shut my mind off,' he says. 'I can retreat inside myself and yet still communicate with other people. It's like being in two places at once.'

Young learned to shut himself down long ago. From early childhood, he suffered serious physical and mental abuse at the hands of his father. He was regularly beaten, deprived of food, dangled over the

THE YOUNG CONUNDRUM

Scientists have been trying to find out how Rob Young has done what he's done



Dr Courtney Kipps, consultant sports physician at the English Institute of Exercise, Medicine and Health first

encountered Young four weeks into his challenge. 'Rob has rewritten the textbooks in sports medicine as far as how much is too much is concerned,' he says. 'The usual principles don't apply: you'd normally build up gradually to a marathon and then allow a recovery period before doing another one. You'd also want good nutrition and recovery strategies. But Rob doesn't appear to need as much recovery as everyone else and his diet is woefully inadequate for an endurance athlete. He is quite unique.'

Using force plates embedded in a treadmill, Kipps monitored Young's stride at paces ranging from 3:00-4:30 marathon pace. 'When he ran at his preferred pace, akin to a 3:30 marathon, he landed with

pinpoint accuracy,' says Kipps. 'Each footstrike was identical to the last.' This, says Kipps, contributed to a high running economy and probably reduced his incidence of injury. 'At 3:30 pace he was a machine.'

When Rob ran significantly faster or, interestingly, slower, his landings were more variable. At 4:30 pace his mid-forefoot strike turned into a heelstrike, placing more stress on the tibialis posterior tendon, which controls pronation. Kipps says most of Rob's niggles disappeared when he stopped running slower than his natural pace.

The one time Rob had a serious injury was last December; an MRI scan showed a stress response in his ankle – the precursor to a stress fracture. 'I said, "Rob, you can't run on this; if you do you'll end up being out for far longer." I persuaded him to wear a boot to offload the foot. For anyone else, you'd get them to do that for four weeks and then make a gradual

return to running. Rob wore it for two weeks and then did a few sessions on an anti-gravity treadmill before going back into the marathons. Could others do what Rob has done? Probably not. But given what he has demonstrated, we can't say for sure they couldn't.'



Daniel Lieberman, a professor of human evolutionary biology at Harvard University, US, who has extensively

researched running form, assessed Young's biomechanics before and after he won the Race across America. 'No-one agrees totally on running form, but I believe Rob's would be considered exquisite by most coaches,' he says. 'He has minimal overstride and an essentially impact-free gait that probably reduces his likelihood of injury. He also has great flexibility and considerable core strength. If only more people ran like him.'

>

banisters upside down and pushed down the stairs in a suitcase. His father was also abusive to his mother and sister, and even killed the family dog. 'My early years were a living hell,' he says. His mother eventually left, taking the two children with her, but she was unable to cope on her own. Young ended up in care and later with a foster parent, whom he credits with helping him turn his life around.

Young's was the sort of start in life that so often ends up with the victim, in turn, becoming a perpetrator of violence and abuse. But he has a different take: 'Through the many years of hardship and abuse I developed qualities which I may otherwise not have – strength, kindness, loyalty and honesty.' He says these are the characteristics that drive him to help and inspire others and it's no accident that each of the three charities he supports focuses on giving children a better future.

'I now see my background as an asset,' he tells me. 'I can use my experiences to connect to kids in a similar situation. I can give them hope by telling them a few hard facts about my life and what I've gone on to achieve...'

Young no longer sees any of his birth family. 'My family tree only goes forward, not backwards,' he says. For now, family

means fiancée Joanne and Alex, but there's another baby on the way. Young speaks lovingly of his 'little family' but it's obvious there's a conflict between his desire to be a good dad and provide for them, and his drive to follow his running dreams.

'I want to be someone who can inspire people,' he says. 'I'm happier [since I started running], because I'm doing something I want to do. But I'm unhappy that I can't do more to support my family. Am I being a slightly lousy father? Probably. But I've taken that step to challenge myself and do something I believe strongly in. And hopefully that will inspire Alex and benefit his life in the future.'

You can't help wondering if Joanna wishes she'd never made that bet back in April 2014. Does she? 'Yes, in a way,' says Young. 'We've had our ups and downs. I've been away a lot and so it's been very tough, especially when it comes to money. If there was a constant income she'd be happy with all the running.'

'I want to take myself to the edge of human endurance'

Donors and friends have helped here and there – one paid towards Young's expenses for Race Across America and another paid the couple's rent one month when things were particularly tight, but money has been a problem since Young left his job as a manager at a motor parts

company to focus on running, a few months into his challenge. He now works part-time in a sports shop.

'So many people have something they want to achieve and they say, "I'll do it tomorrow. I'll do it next week. Next year..." Ten years later, they think, "I wish I'd done it back then." I've shattered all those layers and become the person I really am. In my heart, I'm an adventurer.'

BEYOND THE EDGE

When Young and I spoke, one of his aims was to break the world record for the 'longest known distance' run continuously without sleep. It stood at 350 miles, set by renowned ultra runner Dean Karnazes. Before I'd even finished writing this article, he'd achieved it. He started at 9.30am on Tuesday, July 21, and ran continuously until 12.48am on Saturday, July 25, when

28
Average miles
run per day

LEADING THE FIELD
For Rob Young, there
is no such thing as
too much running

YOUNG'S YEAR IN NUMBERS

110

Most miles run
in one day

3

The average number
of hours he slept
each night

1

Injury sustained
during the record-
breaking year

0

The number of songs
he listened to

15

Sugars in
his signature
quadruple espressos

20

Pence still owed by
fiancée Joanna

medical staff persuaded him to stop because they were concerned about irregularities in his heartbeat and other alarming symptoms, such as headaches and hallucinations – ‘I saw seals in the road.’

By then he had run 373.75 miles without sleep. ‘At one point I really started believing I could get to 500 miles,’ he says. ‘But once I hit around 340 miles I felt horrible. Your legs go first. Then your lower back and shoulders. And then the headaches start. Every step felt as if I had no shoes on – as if I was slamming my feet into the ground and at the same time someone was hitting the soles with a baseball bat. I thought it couldn’t get any worse and then, all of a sudden, I was experiencing a new intensity of pain: my face was on fire – bright red, tingling – I was dizzy, my chest was tight and my throat closing up. It was a whole new level of hurt.’

The medical team put him on an ECG, but they could not be sure from his heart profile if he was suffering from extreme exhaustion or having a cardiac event. Blood tests would confirm one way or another, but it took them 10 minutes to persuade Young to call it a day and take the tests.

But that’s not the end of it. In September Young took part in a 48-hour treadmill event for charity and then set off on a 1,900-mile relay run around the UK with fellow record-breaking runner Adam Holland; it took them 25 days. ‘The running is a tool to inspire,’ says Young. ‘I’ve got to keep raising the bar to maintain that.’

But I think it’s more than a tool to inspire; there’s something about running itself that resonates with Young. For someone whose past necessitated retreat and withdrawal, nothing could be more physical and present than running. It reminds you that

you’re strong and free – that you’re alive and, in Young’s case, almost indestructible.

‘I want to find the ultimate running challenge,’ he says. ‘I look at the existing records and challenges out there and I don’t see them as the ultimate. My goal is to break as many of those as quickly as possible and then achieve something that makes all the people who’ve set those records look around and say, “That’s a phenomenal record.” I want to take myself close to the very edge of human endurance, breaking point – and beyond.’

If anyone is capable of doing that, I’ll bet you more than 20p Rob Young is the man. **RW**

Rob Young raises money for Dreams Come True – a charity that fulfils dreams for children with terminal or life-limiting conditions – the NSPCC and Great Ormond Street Hospital. marathonmanuk.com

Run for your life

As the years pass and you change as a runner, the rules you should follow to keep performing at your best need to evolve, too. Here's how to stay strong, healthy and happy for decades to come



Ask a coach, nutritionist or physio for some words of running wisdom and, if they know their stuff, they'll start by asking *you* a question: **What kind of runner are you?** 'The advice I give runners varies a lot, depending on how old they are and how serious they are,' says Dr Jordan Metzl, author of *Running Strong: The Sports Doctor's Complete Guide to Staying Healthy and Injury-Free for Life* (Rodale, £15.99). Nutritional, training and psychological needs evolve as you progress from an enthusiastic beginner, to a racer gunning for a PB, to a masters athlete determined to stay in the game. With this in mind, we put together a panel of experts with a vast amount of experience in all areas of running, and asked for their tips on how you can run well down through the years.

THE EXPERT PANEL

Greg McMillan, world-renowned running coach and exercise physiologist (mcmillanrunning.com); **Frank Shorter**, winner of the 1972 Olympic marathon and

still running regularly at the age of 67; **Dr Jordan Metzl**, sports-medicine specialist and author; **Dr Jim Afremow**, sports psychology consultant and author of *The*

Champion's Mind: How Great Athletes Think, Train and Thrive (Rodale, £10.68); and **Kim Mueller** Elite runner, new mum and sports nutritionist (fuel-factor.com).

RULES FOR NEW RUNNERS

OAbout 50 per cent of newbies get injured in their first year because their bones, ligaments and muscles aren't used to the stress of running. When you're just starting out, forget about speed, and boost your volume slowly and carefully to stay healthy and consistent.

Choose shoes wisely
Go to a specialist running shop late in the day (when your feet are a little swollen, as they will be mid-run) and have one of the sales staff watch you run. They can suggest shoes that work with your gait, body type and preferences. Buy a comfortable pair that feel snug in the heel, with a thumb-width of space in front of your longest toe.

Breathe easy
If at any point during a run you can't carry on a conversation, take a walk break – even if that means you end up doing more walking than running. Walk breaks allow you to stay out for longer and build stamina, as your bones and muscles adapt. Over time, you'll need shorter breaks.

Time, not distance
Don't be tempted to speed up to finish faster, which can lead to injury. Add five to 10 minutes of running per week. Back off slightly

every fourth week to let your musculoskeletal system adapt.

Make a commitment
Accountability to others can be a stronger driver than self-motivation. Arrange to meet a friend for a run or join a running group.

Eat healthily (not more – or less)
Many people who take up running to lose weight overcompensate for the calories they think they're burning. Others cut calories while adding miles, which saps energy and increases the risk of injury and illness. At first, keep your intake as is, emphasising wholegrains, fruit and veg, healthy fats and lean protein.

Walk breaks allow you to stay out for longer

RULES FOR RUNNERS

AT THEIR PEAK

Once you can run comfortably without stopping for 45 minutes two or three times per week, you're ready to shift your focus to performance. Runners tend to peak between the ages of 26 and 35, but if you took up running later you may still be hitting PBs in your 50s.

Do speed intervals every week

Speedwork strengthens fast-twitch muscle fibres, teaches the heart to deliver oxygen-fuelled blood to your muscles more efficiently and toughens your mind against discomfort. The result: long runs feel easier, you can endure fast runs for longer without suffering and when the pain does come, you can handle it. Start with this: after a 15-min warm-up, run one min fast, one min slow, repeat 5-10 times. Progress to this: after a 15-min warm-up, run 8-12 x 400m fast, with 200m jog breaks in-between. Aim for 15-25 minutes of fast running.

Work on your kick

Many PB dreams are dashed near the end of the race, when you're fatigued. Practise pushing when tired by making the last mile your fastest in one run each week (on a long run or tempo run). On interval day, dig deep on the last few reps. And always cool down: running easy for 15 mins after a hard run teaches you to press on when your energy is low.

Eat mostly carbs

If you're running faster, longer and harder, fuelling matters: consume too little and you'll

burn lean muscle and compromise your immune system. A 10st (63.5kg) runner burns roughly 100 calories for every mile he/she runs, so make sure you get plenty of carbs (2.7g-4.5g per 500g of body weight, per day) from wholegrains, fruit and veg. If you're trying to lose weight, tally the number of calories you burn in a day, subtract 500 and consume at least that many to avoid under-fuelling and the risks it brings.

Boost your immunity

High-intensity training suppresses the immune system for up to 24 hours, leaving runners vulnerable to upper-respiratory infections. Within 30 minutes of a tough workout, take in 10-20g of protein (which stimulates production of white blood cells), colourful fruits and vegetables (rich in anti-inflammatories and antioxidants) and probiotics (which are found

in foods such as kefir and Greek yoghurt). Also, make sure you get enough rest: research shows that people who sleep for less than seven hours per night are three times more likely to catch a cold as those who sleep more than eight.

Focus for a fast finish

Studies have shown that elite athletes who focus on their effort race faster than those who let their minds wander. Break your race or tempo run into chunks (miles, fuel stations, lamp posts) and check in with yourself at each one to ask: How do my legs feel? Can I push harder, or should I back off?

*Break
your
race into
chunks*

RULES FOR RUNNERS

*RETURNING FROM
INJURY (OR PREGNANCY)*

A healthy return to the sport after being sidelined requires patience, caution and smart training.

Recover properly

Cross-training keeps your heart and lungs fit as your body recovers. Start with activities that call for different motions to running (eg cycling) and progress to those that mimic running, but without the impact (such as aqua-jogging).

Break the cycle

See a running-specialist physiotherapist to determine why you got hurt in the first place and to craft a plan that will help prevent re-injury.

Try a test run

When you are no longer in pain and have the green light from your physio/doctor, attempt to run for 10 minutes. If it hurts, stop and wait for another three to five days before trying again.

EYE ON THE PRIZE
Focus on the finish,
then go for it

RULES FOR RUNNERS

AFTER THE BIG 4-0

Ok, here's the bad news: runners tend to slow by three to six per cent over the course of their 40s, by 10 per cent per decade in their 50s and 60s, and by 15 per cent per decade after 70, as their strength, flexibility and bone density diminish. Now for the good news: much can be done to fend off the decline.

Focus on strength

If you haven't already started a strength-training regime (which helps runners at any age), it's more important now than ever. Muscle mass declines by roughly eight per cent per decade after the age of 40 and strength-training helps to counteract that loss, while also building muscular scaffolding to ease the burden of running on ageing joints. Spend 30 minutes twice a week targeting muscles that running often misses (such as glutes, hips, core and arms). Use your body as weight, by doing squats, lunges, press-ups and planks.

Foam-roll every day:

Flexibility is another casualty of age, but booking yourself a daily session with a foam roller can preserve and restore it. Foam-rolling your hamstrings, quads and glutes loosens up connective tissues and promotes blood flow, much like a massage.

Keep up some speed

Old injuries and a declining VO₂ max (the body's capacity to transport oxygen to muscles) can put ageing runners off speedwork, but it


pays to put your foot on the accelerator from time to time. Practising quick leg turnover is key for maintaining your neuromuscular coordination, range of motion and fitness. Start by adding some short pickups (eg 10-20 seconds fast, 30-60 seconds recovery, repeated 10 times) to a routine run. If you want to progress to something more challenging, try 60 seconds fast followed by two minutes slow, repeated three times.

Nurture your bones

To counteract age-related bone-density loss, which can increase the risk of stress fractures in older runners, make sure you're getting enough calcium and vitamin D. Good sources of calcium include dairy products, as well as tofu, broccoli and sardines. For your vitamin D hit, stick oily fish such as salmon on the menu, try cod liver oil supplements and spend some time in the sun.

'Slow down as slowly as possible'

Adjust your goals:

You may not be getting any faster, but, in the words of Olympic-marathon gold medallist Frank Shorter, vow to 'slow down as slowly as possible'. Look forward to any birthday that puts you in a new age group category. Explore new distances (such as a mile or a marathon) or new events (triathlons, trail races) in which you can still notch yourself a shiny new PB. And remember, the most important thing of all is this: even if you have slowed down a bit, at least you're still out there, running and loving it. 



RULES FOR STRESSED RUNNERS

If life's obligations have accumulated to the point where lacing up feels like just another stressor, it's probably time to reframe your running. Ditch your watch, put ambitious time goals and workouts on the back burner and focus on running easy a few times each week just to de-stress. As long as you're continuing to run regularly, it won't be too difficult to jump back into more intense training when your life calms down.

Shorten your stride

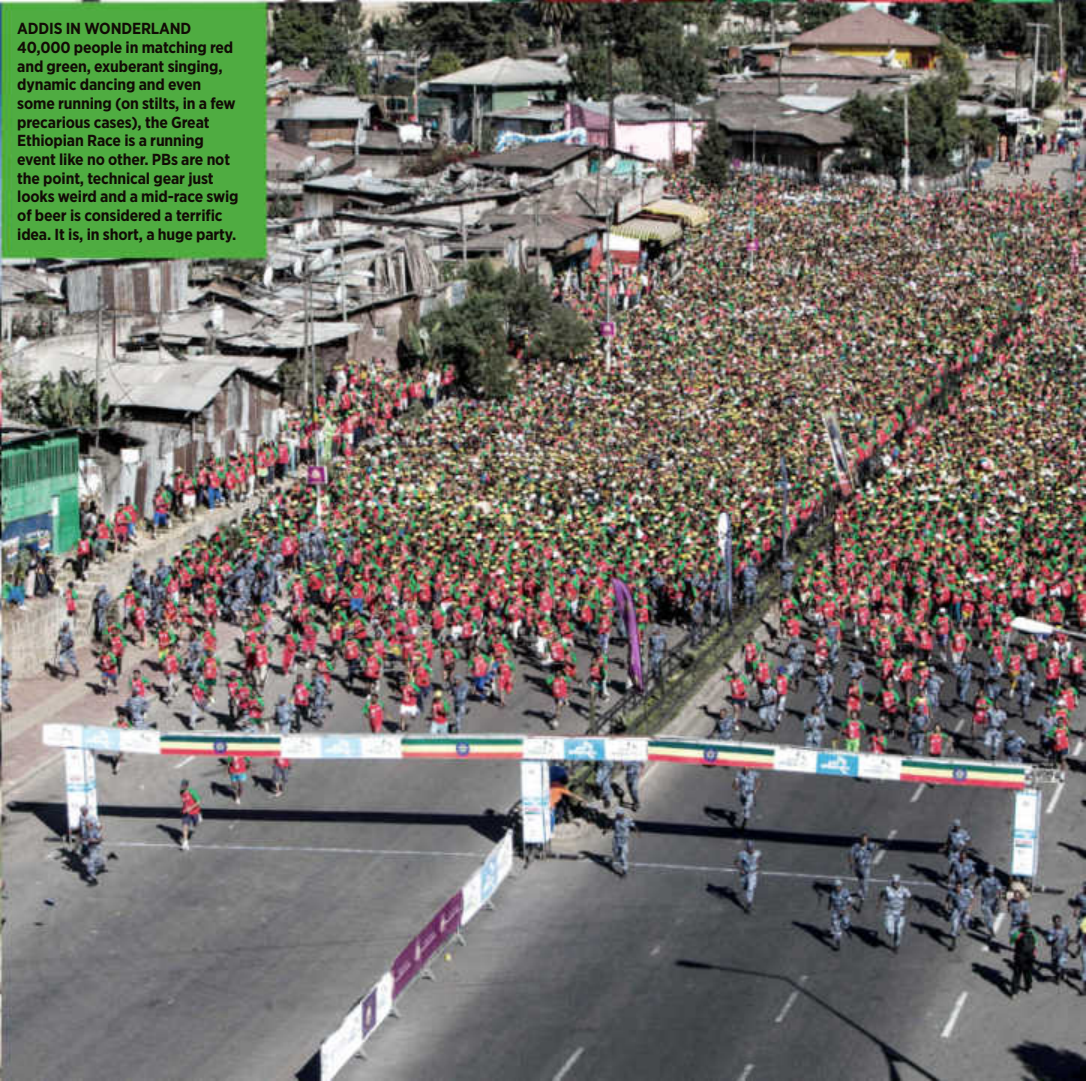
A shorter stride and quicker cadence can reduce the impact of running, which may, in turn, decrease the risk of developing an injury. Aim for between 170 and 180 foot strikes per minute.

New mums, ease back in and eat up

The hormone that loosens ligaments to allow childbirth can linger in the body after the birth, leaving new mums prone to injury if they return to running too early. Wait at least six to eight weeks after giving birth before starting again. And bear in mind that breastfeeding mums need an extra 300-500 calories a day.



ADDIS IN WONDERLAND
40,000 people in matching red and green, exuberant singing, dynamic dancing and even some running (on stilts, in a few precarious cases), the Great Ethiopian Race is a running event like no other. PBs are not the point, technical gear just looks weird and a mid-race swig of beer is considered a terrific idea. It is, in short, a huge party.





ትላንታ ግጥም in Lōwn

As the only mass-participation race staged in a running-obsessed nation, the Great Ethiopian Run distills the country's passion into a 10K carnival on the streets of the capital, Addis Ababa. RW's Kerry McCarthy was swept along





MASS APPEAL
(Clockwise, from top)
Lining up on Cormorant Street; Haile Gebrselassie was a very generous host at the post-race party; spectators or, possibly, participants; and two runners encapsulate the spirit of the GER

I'm

eight in line to get my face painted. This sort of thing is not normally my bag at all, but sometimes you come across a race so unusual, so rare in its air of innocence, excitement and joie de vivre that you find yourself swept up by the buzz around you. And that, in my case at least, means sporting an Ethiopian flag on one cheek. Of my face.

All down the mile-long Cormorant Street in downtown Addis Ababa, near the start of the Great Ethiopian Run (GER), other face painters are stationed at 20-metre intervals, each with a queue of at least a dozen runners, who are gyrating, high-fiving, singing or jiggling up and down with nervous energy as they wait their turn.

Suddenly, pandemonium: a runner is down on one knee, sheepishly holding out a ring to his girlfriend, who is wide-eyed and screeching with disbelief. People are legging it over from every direction to surround them and, jostling for position, chant with excitement. When the woman of the moment says 'yes', the lovebirds are lifted onto two broad sets of shoulders and carried down the street towards the starting pen, followed by a boisterous procession that wouldn't look out of place in New Orleans during Mardi Gras.

And all this is before the race has even begun. But the Great Ethiopian Run is unlike any other race you're likely to

experience, as the next hour would make clear. I crossed the finish line sodden with sweat, dishevelled, with a paint-streaked face and having clocked by far my slowest ever 10K, but good Lord, what a race.

More on those on-course shenanigans shortly, but first a quick rundown of how the GER came into being. If you're thinking the name sounds similar to the Great North Run (GNR), that's because the races are unlikely sister events, both staged by Nova International, the company run by former GB distance runner Brendan Foster.

In 2000, Ethiopian running legend Haile Gebrselassie was introduced to Foster and, having witnessed the phenomenal growth of the GNR and its impact on both the regional community and the UK running scene, was prompted to start a discussion on how something similar could be achieved back home in Addis.

'We thought it would be a pipe dream, but a couple of months later a large team of people came to my country and went to work straight away,' says Gebrselassie when I interview him at his offices in uptown Addis two days before the race.

'We didn't have an office, so we had to persuade the British Embassy to let us work out of their compound. All we found was problem after problem, but we got there.'



After almost a year of battling issues such as the tiny budget, a dodgy internet connection, where to source large quantities of clean bottled water and an absence of crowd barriers anywhere in the country, the first GER took place in 2001, with around 9,000 runners.

Since then it's become just as much of a success as the GNR, swelling to 40,000 runners in 2014, which makes it by far the biggest road race not just in Ethiopia, but on the entire African continent.

A massive achievement, then, but one with an unexpected downside for Gebrselassie. 'The race is so popular as a social and cultural event here that even



‘Entrants took a fairly relaxed approach to what they wore’

government ministers can’t get hold of entries,’ he says. ‘If we were allowed to sell 200,000 tickets they would sell out in a few days. Every year from about two months before the event I get politicians and businessmen in Addis calling me up and saying, “Haile, the race is sold out and I need a ticket. Please do something for me.” When it gets to three weeks before the race I just keep my phone switched off or give it to my secretary. This year I even had to buy some race entries from a tout on the street to give to a government minister.’

The idea that people would go this nuts for a 10K race is alien to those of us fortunate enough to benefit from a well-established race scene; a quick scan of the Race Finder section at the back of RW or a click in the events section of our website will throw up events of every size, distance, terrain and level of difficulty you could wish for. But the baffling truth is that Ethiopia, so synonymous with distance running, just doesn’t cater for amateur runners. Remember, this is the country that gave us the first African Olympic marathon champion (Abebe Bikila in Rome, 1960) and that has produced not just Gebrselassie and his 27 world records, but also Kenenisa Bekele, Derartu Tulu and Tirunesh Dibaba, to name but a few of Ethiopia’s other running legends.

Not that there are not plenty of runners here: there are the elites, of course – not just the famous ones you see on the TV, but also the lucky ones plucked from poverty to train at 3,000m above sea level in the hills above Addis, and who fly around the world making a good living winning second-tier marathons such as Rome, Prague and Amsterdam.

Then there are the sub-elites, the runners trying to break into the group above. For them there is a race scene, but it’s limited to a relentless series of track meets around the country where they vie to catch the attention of local coaches, managers and talent-spotters looking for athletes to add to their stable. And since 2014 there has been an international trail race, the Ethiotrail, run in the Rift Valley.

And for everyone else? Nothing, despite a deep love of running among a great many Ethiopians (which for many is ingrained from childhood, when the only way to get to and from school each day is under your

own steam). This explains why when the GER came along, the rush to participate was so great, and why I witnessed such energy and joy out on the course.

There are no race numbers and race T-shirts are proof of entry, which resulted in an extraordinary sight – 40,000 runners in matching red and green streaming down the hill in close order away from the start line. It was like watching a huge herd stampeding across the savannah. As well as getting their faces painted, most had customised their tees by ripping, cutting, tying, knotting, drawing or adding glitter.

Aside from these personal touches, entrants took a fairly relaxed approach to what they wore. No compression kit or split racing shorts here; instead, there were jeans, Bermuda shorts, combat trousers, bikini bottoms, flip-flops and bare feet – the only sartorial rule seemed to be to try to look as little like a serious runner as possible. PB-chasers were in the minority and I soon realised I was taking part in an event that was not so much a race as a mass carnival of movement.

All around me was jubilant singing, chanting and dancing – every so often someone would throw their hat or cap onto the ground and those nearby would stop and jive around it – to no music whatsoever. At around the five kilometre

mark (I say ‘around’ as there was no way of knowing; distance markers had been considered wholly unnecessary, while enquiries about chip timing were met with blank looks) there was a stage where performers were breakdancing to Ethiopian dance music. Cue enthusiastic mimicry from the runners, many of whom seemed determined to master a spinning headstand before they ran a step further.

From there to the finish, whatever pace there had been became progressively slower. It seemed a combination of the sun rising ever higher and people wanting to delay getting to the finish for as long as possible meant that the last half of the run was completed at walking pace, with the odd stop-off to chat to spectators, maybe take a swig from a proffered bottle of beer, or spend a few refreshing minutes under a hose-pipe sprinkler. Local runners chatted to international entrants (who make up a mere 1.25 per cent of the field, though this does not take into account non-Ethiopians resident in Addis) or, where there was no common language, simply communicated their shared experience by dancing and high-fiving before hugging and departing to find someone else to bond with.

It took me roughly an hour and a half to get to the finish, where I collapsed onto a chair and accepted a small bowl of salted popcorn and a double shot of alarmingly strong coffee that had the consistency of mousse. As I recovered I watched a Channel 4 film crew interviewing a bunch of runners from Stockport Harriers, who had won a competition to come and run the event and then attend a post-race party at Gebrselassie’s mansion.

At that party, as the great man goes round pouring everyone tumbler of whisky in an effort to get them sloshed enough to try some traditional Ethiopian dancing, he chats about the race. ‘I think it is the atmosphere that all races should have,’ he says, ‘and we want to have more of them in my country. It will not be easy because budgets will not be big, but we have to try, to say that the Great Ethiopian Run is not the end of things, but the start.’

‘In countries like England, running is popular, but it is not the obsession that it is here. Here, on every news bulletin there is always something about running. In England you are spoilt with the facilities, but maybe not the desire. Here we have the desire, but not the opportunity.’

Here’s hoping that opportunity knocks very soon. Ethiopia deserves it. 🏃

For details on how to enter, travel packages and all other info (including how you and your running club could win a trip to the Great Ethiopian Run in 2016), visit greatrun.org/ethiopia



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For a start

Why eat a good breakfast?
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Quick one

A nippy workout to get your recovery started

THIS MONTH'S EXPERT PANEL



TERRENCE MAHON

Coach to the US's female distance athletes at this year's World Champs. **p74**



GREG MCMILLAN

Exercise physiologist and coach. mcmillanrunning.com. **p77**



ROBYN LALONDE

A recovery and nutrition specialist, and a Nike+ run coach. **p80**



LIZ APPLGATE

Director of sports nutrition at the University of California. **p78**



MACKENZIE MADISON

Professional triathlete and coach based in Oregon, US. **p70**



JO PAVEY

The European 10,000m champion has competed at four Olympics. **p75**



MAKE A MASTER PLAN

How to schedule key training elements
to become healthier, stronger and faster

Between work, family and social obligations, life can sometimes feel like a game of Tetris – so many moving pieces and a limited amount of time to fit them into the right places. If you tell yourself you'll run whenever you have a free moment, you may rarely get out at all – and when you do, you won't be reaping the benefits of a more thought-out approach. 'A training plan gives you direction and structure,' says Mackenzie Madison, a professional triathlete and coach. 'It brings variety, too, so you're not doing the same thing every day.'

Variation has physical benefits as well. Research shows picking up the pace for short sections provides extra cardiovascular benefits and can aid weight loss. Adding weight training can help prevent injuries and improve bone density. Your training plan can keep you from overdoing it, since rest and hard efforts will be in balance. And it can give you confidence that you can bring to your next race.

Coaches and commercially available training plans are good ways to add structure to your routine, but a DIY approach can be very effective, too. If you follow a few basic guidelines you should be able to plan your own training or adjust an existing plan to fit your lifestyle.



01 PLOT THREE GOOD DAYS

'Three quality days a week is how much a person needs to run to improve,' says running coach Cliff Latham. 'If you're doing a long run one day, a tempo run another day and intervals on a third day, you'll see improvement.' And that doesn't just mean faster race times: these workouts ramp up calorie-burning, boost overall health and make you a more confident runner.

Long runs build endurance and mental toughness, and you don't have to go very long to benefit. Latham says that athletes who aren't training for a half marathon or longer can make eight miles their limit. Build your distance slowly, adding no more than a mile a week, and keep the pace easy. Many runners plan long runs for the weekend, when most of us have more time.

Rushed weekdays are great for interval runs: a 2012 review of studies found that interval training reduced the risk of high blood pressure, while a 2015 study found subjects who included bursts of speed kept burning calories at a higher-than-normal rate post-run. Intervals can last from 30 seconds to a mile, with periods of walking or jogging between 'on' periods. The effort should feel hard but not all-out – near 5K pace.

Tempo runs – sustained efforts at a comfortably hard pace – blend the endurance-boosting properties of long runs with the speed-developing properties of intervals. Tempo runs train your body and brain to turn up the pace and keep it there.

If you choose to run on the other four days of the week, go at an easy pace.



ON YER BACK
A swim session can be better than rest

02 BUILD IN BREAKS

It's almost impossible to give a blanket recommendation for how much rest you'll need. 'It depends on age, experience and whether you're injury-prone or not,' says running coach Jennifer Harrison. 'A good rule is don't run two hard days back to back.' (Long-run days count as hard days, even though the pace is easy.)

Also, know that a rest day doesn't mean you have to be totally slothful. Harrison, who coaches triathletes, says some of her athletes swim on rest days. In a 2010 study, triathletes who swam after a hard interval run were able to run stronger than those who rested in a 'time to fatigue' test the next day. And don't worry if swimming isn't your thing – Latham's athletes practise other forms of active recovery, such as yoga, walking or going for a bike ride. But take at least one day a week completely off from exercise – two, if you're starting out,

injury-prone or susceptible to mental burnout.

03 ADD TIME TO EASE IN (AND OUT)

It can be tempting to jump right into your workout, but Madison says that's a bad idea. Your body needs at least 15 minutes to increase blood flow to major muscle groups. And a 2012 study found that athletes who performed a dynamic warm-up had more hamstring flexibility and quad strength than those who did no warm-up. Increased flexibility helps protect against injuries, especially when you're doing intervals or running at tempo pace. Consider starting workouts – especially hard ones – with jogging and plyometrics to activate key running muscles.

Madison says that early morning runners in particular need warm-up time, since we move very little when we sleep. But coach Joe McConkey says evening runners aren't off the hook:



WHEN LIFE STRIKES

Sometimes you just can't get out to run. Here's what to do if...

You have to miss one workout

If it's once in a while, let it go, says Harrison. If you're consistently missing a key weekly workout, you need to reevaluate your schedule or your goals.

You have to miss two workouts

Reschedule the workout that best aligns with your goal and skip the other. For example, if you're prepping for a marathon, prioritise your long run.

You were up all night with a sick child

'If it's one night of no sleep you can probably complete your morning workout,' says Harrison. 'If it's several nights, skip it and sleep in.'

You just can't find the time

Harrison split her runs in half when her twins were babies (two 20-min runs instead of one 40-min session). Do what you can in the time you have.

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'You've been sitting all day, so you may need a longer warm-up – particularly before high-intensity work.' He has his athletes do 10-15 minutes of jogging plus a few drills and dynamic stretches (such as high knees) before beginning the fast portion of a workout.

Don't forget to cool down. 'When we're working hard, all systems are firing, but when we suddenly stop, these systems slam on the brakes without letting our bodies return to normal,' says Madison. Jog for a few minutes after a hard workout, then walk. Build in at least 10 minutes after interval or tempo runs, though Madison says you can use the final mile or two of a long or easy run to start the cool-down process.

04 SET ASIDE STRENGTH TIME

Madison's athletes do two hour-long strength-training sessions a week, plus three sessions of core training. (That can mean simply doing a few planks, leg lifts and crunches after a run.) She recommends dedicating one weight-training day to building power with drills and plyometrics – such as walking lunges and box jumps – while the other should be used to work on general body strength.

Prioritise the core work. If you can fit in only one

strength session a week, focus on power one week and strength and stability the next. Latham says that if you're truly time-starved, try fewer reps with heavy weights. Doing as few as four reps with the most weight you can manage builds strength quickly. When you do your strength training is a matter of personal preference. If you do it after a tough workout, you can take the next day off. 'But, mentally, that can be hard,' says Latham. If the choice is doing it on your easy day or not doing it at all, do it on your easy day.

05 TAKE TIME TO RECOVER

To feel your best on all your runs, help your body to rebuild between sessions. 'Make sure you eat a protein-rich snack after you run,' says Madison, especially after hard workouts or runs

WHEN TO WING IT

Your plan shouldn't own you. Bend the rules for these scenarios

Your friends go for a long run on a different day than you'd planned

Go, but stick to your pace if someone in the group opts to treat long-run day like tempo day.

There's a fun 5K you want to do at the last minute

'Do fun things when you can,' says coach Madison. 'Just know that one might jeopardise the next day of training.'

You missed a hard workout, so you do it the day before a long run

Learning how to run on tired legs can help you late in tough races, says coach Latham. But don't do this often.

You're exhausted

Building a schedule takes trial and error; you have to figure out how much rest you need. Listen to your body – not your smartphone's calendar alert.

lasting longer than an hour. Also, try to get enough sleep – however much you need to wake feeling rested – as well as time with your foam roller. 'Foam rolling works out the scar tissue that we all have in our muscles,' says Madison. Focus mainly on your lower body – the quads, hamstrings, calves, glutes and IT bands.

Harrison recommends rolling for 15-20 minutes a day. At a minimum, try to get in five minutes every day and do longer sessions after tough workouts.

06 TRAIN TO RACE

If you're targeting a race, try to start most of your long runs at the time of day your race will begin. Harrison says you should do one or two dress rehearsal runs in the weeks leading up to the taper to test what you'll eat the day before and morning

of the race, how you'll fuel and what you'll wear.

Your pace on these runs should mimic race day, at least for a few miles, says Madison. You'll learn a lot: for example, prerun porridge might work for you on easy days, but if your stomach revolts when you speed up, you'll be glad to know that in advance.

When to start your taper is a personal choice, says McConkey. Some half and full marathoners taper for a few weeks, while 5K and 10K runners need less taper time. 'It should be shorter volume and more rest, but with the intensity still high,' says McConkey. Do fewer, shorter reps at your usual pace during speed sessions. Harrison has her athletes do only four repeats 'so they can keep that snap and not exhaust their legs', she says. 'The key is to keep muscle memory and snap alive.'

COOL YOUR RESOURCES
Walking after a hard run feels good and works wonders

IT'LL END IN CHEERS

Finish the year in style by training for a final – and different – event

You trained hard for your autumn goal race, basked in finish-line glory and now you need to decide: what next? Planning a last hoorah for the season can keep your momentum up as the end of the year approaches. Drop down in distance and – with some refining – you may have a shot at a PB, says coach Terrence Mahon. 'There's a lot of anecdotal evidence out there that training for a marathon can end up helping your 5K,' he says.

The hard evidence is there, too: the additional mitochondria, capillaries and oxygen-carrying capacity built via miles of half-marathon or marathon training translate well to a 5K or 10K, which are both 93-97 per cent dependent on a strong aerobic engine (while the marathon is 99 per cent aerobic).

Move up in distance and you can tackle a longer race without starting from square one. Your stronger fast-twitch muscles and improved biomechanics from 5K or 10K training can, paired with a good base, provide an edge in a longer race. The key is to set realistic goals and use your training window to fill in gaps that your goal-race prepping missed. Here's how.



CHOOSE YOUR RACE

It's generally easier to drop down to a shorter race, says running coach David Manthey. However, the longer the original race, the longer it takes to recover.

Half-marathoners with little post-race tiredness could train after a few days and run a 5K or 10K in three weeks or less, says Mahon. Marathoners should stick to easy jogs for at least a week before easing into training, and wait four to six weeks between races. Considering a longer distance? If you trained for three months for your 5K or 10K, by working up to 30 miles per week and at least one eight-miler, you could finish a half marathon three to four weeks later, says Mahon. However, if your longest run in training for your 5K was your 5K, give yourself six weeks and shoot for a 10K, says Manthey.



ADD SOME SPEED

Half and full marathoners must increase leg turnover, train the body to efficiently burn sugar, and get used to pushing harder, says Mahon. To do this, run fast. Ease back into training, then add two days of speedwork to your mix: run eight to 12 200m repeats at 5K pace, with 200m recovery. Three days later, run eight to 10 400m repeats at 10K pace, with 200m recovery. You'll train faster for this race, but your volume should stay lower, peaking at 50-60 per cent of what you did for your half marathon (or 30-40 per cent of what you did for a marathon), says Manthey. Your 'long run' need not exceed 10 miles if you're dropping down to a 10K, or six miles for a 5K. If you do a speed session in race week, keep it short and then have three easy days, says Mahon.



OR BANK SOME DISTANCE

Runners who targeted a 5K or 10K should be able to train within a week of their race. When adding distance, learn to keep a steady rhythm over time, says Mahon. To do this, plan one long-interval workout and one tempo run each week, while inching up your long run. A well-trained runner moving from a 10K to a half marathon might try three- or four-mile repeats at half-marathon effort, with 400m recovery. Then, a few days later, run a four-to-five-mile tempo run at 15-20 seconds slower than half-marathon pace. The following week, add another mile repeat and a mile to the tempo run. Work up to a long run of at least 10 miles two weeks before race day, and to a weekly mileage that's five to seven miles longer than the peak week of your 5K or 10K training.



FOOT FAULTS
Find out where
you're going
wrong. And how

Q Can I do a DIY version of gait analysis?

Look at the wear pattern on the tread of your running shoes. Wear on the outer edge could suggest excessive supination (outward roll of the foot), which may mean you're not absorbing shock well and may need more cushioning. Increased wear on the inner side of the shoe and the ball of the foot may suggest overpronation (inward roll). You may need a shoe offering more stability.

There's also the wet-footprint test, which gives you an idea of what foot type you might have (but won't show what happens when you run). A solid imprint, with almost no indentation on the arch (between the ball and heel), suggests overpronation. Some arch indentation suggests a normal arch, or mild pronation. A large indentation on the arch – with, often, a bit missing on the outside border – suggests excessive supination.

Far better than these options is to have a gait analysis carried out by professionals. Rather than just concentrating on the feet, this will examine your whole biomechanical chain.

WORKOUT ONE-MINUTE INTERVALS

A good endurance session for longer road races that lets you practise surges in pace when you're tired. Ideally, do it on a trail or good grass surface.

Warm up for 10 mins

Run 15 mins at tempo pace (comfortably hard)

Go straight into 20 mins of alternating one min easy, one min hard. Start with one min easy, finish with one min hard.

10-min warm-down

Q What are the rules for a first run after an injury lay-off?

Approach your first run back with caution and don't overdo it. Run for no more than 10 minutes to begin with. This may seem like a really short amount of time, but think of it as an assessment of your recovery and a gentle reintroduction to running. Gaining fitness from running is not the priority at this stage – cross-training can be used for tougher workouts. It's a good idea to break up your first run into smaller chunks of, say, two minutes. This way you can monitor things and stretch a little, if needed. Run at a very slow pace, one at which you could comfortably hold a conversation. Run with a lower leg lift and shorter stride length than you normally would – this will help reduce the force being put through the weakened tissues. And try to run on a softer surface such as grass or trail for your first session, to reduce impact.

Q Are some sessions better suited to particular times of the day?

Our bodies' circadian rhythms affect our ability to work out at certain times of day. They fluctuate over a 24-hour period, determining sleep cycles, body temperature and hormone production. Studies have found that strength and power tend to be greater in the evening because this is the peak time for many of the body's systems, such as body temperature. This means it's probably better to do speed sessions or hill sprints later in the day. In contrast, it may make more sense to do a long run or longer sessions in the morning, when your body temperature is lower.

But consider personal preferences: I tend to do most of my hard workouts in the morning, as it suits my family life, but when trials and championships are approaching, I switch to evening sessions to get the required quality.

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TAKE CHARGE

Elite coach Greg McMillan on the art of recovering between training cycles

I see a bad habit forming in many runners: the lack of a recovery cycle after their big events or racing seasons. Too many are simply finishing one race (often a marathon) and immediately starting to train for the next one. You can get away with this a few times, but some runners get burnt out and leave the sport for new activities after doing so too often; the grind of always training takes a serious toll. Others may reach a performance plateau after a few races and fall well short of their potential, simply because they don't recover properly.

I understand their drive. I love running, too, and there is nothing better than being fully engaged in training for a big race. But never taking a break ignores one of the most important principles that we learned from great coaches and athletes over the last century: runners need to recover properly.

REST TO BE YOUR BEST

Sensible athletes build breaks into their training year. Not a reduced week or two of training every now and then, but weeks of complete rest. They don't only rest; they gain weight, too. Some add almost a stone to their normally light frames while they enjoy time with their families, take holidays and do other things they normally can't do because of their training.

Planned breaks rejuvenate the body and mind in ways that outweigh losses in fitness. They take the pressure off – you don't feel your training is never-ending, or that you're jumping from one goal to the next. The chemistry of the brain, as well as that of the hormonal and immune systems are

compromised during periods of hard training – breaks rejuvenate these systems, allowing you to train better, more consistently and with more zeal in the next training cycle.

Will you lose fitness? Yes. How much is hard to calculate and will depend on how long a break you take. But it's not about how out of shape you get; it's about recovering completely and being ready to attack the next training cycle.

The recovery phase isn't just the downtime, but also the time needed to rebuild mileage and pace. Many runners fail even when they do take time off, because upon their return they jump right back into full training – feeling they have to get in shape quickly. You'll need to plan three to five weeks of rebuilding into your full training load. I usually start at 50 per cent

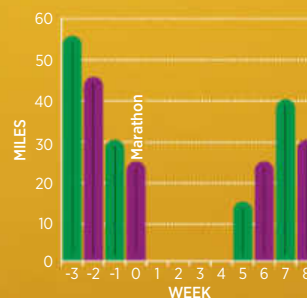
of full mileage, then increase by 10-20 per cent each week (with a recovery week of lower mileage every two to four weeks) until I'm back to 100 per cent. Use common sense and build back slowly.

In the end, what's the rush? A few weeks of downtime never ruined anyone's running career – quite the opposite, in fact.

BUILDING UP THE MILES AGAIN

I took nearly a month off after my last marathon. I gained a few pounds, but I also rediscovered the passion that drives me as a runner; I couldn't wait to challenge myself to do better. The next training cycle went better than

expected because I carried the fitness from the previous cycle, plus my recharged motivation. I'm convinced the recovery phase played an important role in this breakthrough. Here's how my mileage varied before and after a recent marathon:



UP AND EAT 'EM

Five reasons to have a good breakfast, and what to eat before an early run

You may not love getting up early, but mornings are often the best time to run. Races usually start in the morning, so it makes sense to get used to running early. But it can be hard to fuel up properly: eat too much and you'll risk stomach problems; eat too little and you could run out of energy a few miles in.

'You've been fasting and dehydrating all night,' says sports dietitian Kate Davis. 'It's important to find some way to replenish before doing anything that requires a lot of energy.' Here's why breakfast really matters to runners.

01 / MAINTAIN MUSCLE

After a night of sleep, your body is in breakdown mode, especially when it comes to muscle proteins. You have to refresh your muscle cells with amino acids – the building blocks of protein. Aim for 20-25 grams of high-quality protein, along with 50-100 grams of carbs, to replenish the fuel you need (see *Best Breakfast Bets*, below right).

02 / CONTROL WEIGHT

Studies have shown that people who eat breakfast maintain a healthier body weight and have less body fat than those who skip a morning meal. Research also shows that establishing a routine of eating breakfast can help you make wiser choices and curb calorie intake

A.M. FAQs

Your morning-run questions answered

What should I drink?

As soon as you get up, drink 250-500ml of water. 'Your body needs rehydration, and water will help wake you up and get your digestion moving,' says Davis.

Must I eat something?

If you're running easy for 45 mins or less, water may be enough. For anything longer or more intense, you need carbs to burn or your body may break down muscle for fuel.

What about fuelling up the night before?

Carb-loading won't do the job. Overnight, most of those calories will be burned or stored as fat, so you'll be low on fuel the next morning.



B





later in the day. The US National Weight Control Registry, which has tracked successful 'losers' for more than 20 years, says about 80 per cent of those who lose weight and keep it off for years routinely eat breakfast.

03 / POWER YOUR BRAIN

Circulating carbs (blood sugar) are vital fuel for your brain. Studies have shown that for both children and adults, operating on no breakfast short-changes thinking power and can affect maths skills, reading comprehension and memory. Studies of children also show that breakfast eaters tend to be more attentive at school and have better social skills. (Any adult who has had to deal with a 'hangry' colleague can probably attest that the same is true for grown-ups!)

04 / IMPROVE YOUR DIET

Breakfast eaters tend to have a better overall diet than breakfast skippers, and a greater intake of nutrients such as protein, fibre, calcium and iron. Even a basic bowl of cold cereal (topped with milk) and fruit results in improved intakes of calcium, vitamin D, protein and other vitamins and minerals.

05 / REDUCE DISEASE RISK

People who eat breakfast tend to have lower cholesterol levels, which means a reduced risk of heart disease. Those who choose cereal (particularly porridge and other oat-based options) take in more soluble fibre, which may lower harmful LDL (bad cholesterol) levels. Even morning egg eaters have cholesterol levels that are just as healthy as those of people who skip eggs (or eat no breakfast at all). And eating a meal first thing also helps regulate your blood sugar levels, which may help explain why breakfast eaters tend to have a lower risk of developing type 2 diabetes.

BEST BREAKFAST BETS

What you should eat depends on when you're running

A

Eat this pre-run
Toast with banana and honey

Why Carbohydrates (ideally about a half a gram per pound of body weight) will power up your workout.

B

Eat this post-run
Scrambled eggs with feta cheese, sweet potato and a berry-kefir smoothie.

Why Centering your meal on eggs or dairy will supply amino acids to support muscle recovery.

C

Lunch-time run? Eat this
Two slices of wholegrain French toast, Greek yoghurt, strawberries and walnuts.

Why A morning meal that can hold you until a noon run will keep you on track at your desk, too.

BREAKFAST FOOD FACE-OFF



Fried egg v scrambled egg

Both provide six grams of protein. It's what goes in the pan to cook the eggs that matters. Non-stick spray keeps calories in check.



Pancake v waffle

The pancake has more protein than an equal-size waffle. Making your own? Add a half scoop of whey protein powder for recovery flapjacks.



Porridge v Cheerios

The oats have more fibre and more than double the protein (seven v three grams per serving). Top with yoghurt, berries and nuts.



Orange juice v apple juice

The orange juice has more vitamin C. A whole orange or apple is better than either juice, however, with fewer calories and more fibre.




Bacon v sausages

Bacon wins, with 86 calories and six grams of protein in two slices. Two small sausages have more protein but more than twice the saturated fat.



Wholewheat toast v rye toast

Wholewheat typically has more fibre and four grams of protein per slice, versus three grams for rye. Read labels, as brands can vary.



DOWN TOOLS

Making use of your downtime will help you get the most from your training

Regardless of what you hope to gain from your running – speed, endurance, better health – the training you do makes up only half the equation. The time you spend not running serves a crucial role in your progress towards any goal. ‘We can train all we want, but if we don’t pay respect to recovery, it won’t matter,’ says Robyn LaLonde, Nike+ Run Club coach. ‘It’s during the period after a run that your body adapts. Without adequate recovery, your body will break down.’ LaLonde is referring to the process by which your body rebuilds itself to return to its starting state – or become stronger. And there are an increasing array of tools (such as hi-tech compression gear) and techniques (for example, stretching and yoga) that can enhance downtime so runners can train harder and longer without getting hurt. To optimise your recovery, keep a training log with notes about how much you’re sleeping, how much you’re resting, what you’re eating – and how you feel – so you know what works best to restore your body and mind.

COLD CALL

Some runners swear by ice baths to reduce inflammation.

Should you? Lance Dalleck, assistant professor of exercise and sports science at Western State Colorado University, US, says if used too early in training or too often, tools that reduce inflammation (such as ice) might interfere with the process by which your body grows stronger. Instead, prioritise simple recovery techniques – such as sleep and good nutrition – every day.

And reserve aggressive anti-inflammatory methods for your taper and after your race.



TAKE A BREAK

When doing too much leaves you ill, injured or stalled in your progress, you may be overtraining, a syndrome that could also be called under-recovery, says exercise scientist Carwyn Sharp. Be sure to get more rest if you notice any of these red flags:

- ▶ Your legs feel heavy all the time.
- ▶ You're excessively sore.
- ▶ Your race or workout times slow for no apparent reason.
- ▶ You feel on the brink of injury.
- ▶ You're sleeping poorly.
- ▶ You dread running.

FOOD FIX

How your diet can make you stronger

EAT PROTEIN

Amino acids in protein provide the raw materials for new muscle.

ADD FATS

Healthy fats (nuts, salmon, avocado) repair damage to muscle cells.

HYDRATE

Water will keep nutrient-rich blood flowing through your body.

UPGRADE YOUR POST-RUN CARBS

Instead of replenishing with refined carbs, opt for a snack that combines protein with high-quality carbs (fruits and veggies).

REPAIR KIT

Choose from this menu to develop your own repair recipe. Consider what you have access to, what fits into your lifestyle and what sounds fun – for example, yoga won't calm your muscles or your mind if you feel anxious about getting into strange positions on the mat.

THE TOOL	HOW IT WORKS	WHEN TO USE IT
Compression clothing 	Proponents say it boosts blood flow, helps remove lactic acid and reduces inflammation, leading to less Delayed Onset Muscle Soreness (DOMS).	Wear while running or afterwards (within 48 hours). Also, try it the night before a race or when you're travelling, to boost circulation and avoid swelling.
Massage 	May decrease tension, release adhesions between tissues, increase range of motion, realign muscle fibres and prevent minor soft-tissue injuries.	As needed. Some runners find massages help with their recovery, while others use it only when they feel an ache or other early warning sign of injury.
Cold therapy 	Ice baths or ice packs may reduce pain and swelling by constricting blood vessels and limiting inflammation in the muscles.	Soak for 10-20 mins, within 30 mins of a hard workout. Or try a contrast bath that alternates cold and warm for 10 mins each, ending on cold.
Electric muscle stimulation 	Activates muscles passively to help decrease inflammation and increase blood flow without stressing your tendons or joints.	Use on your sore, fatigued or weak muscles for 30-60 minutes once or twice per day, three or more days per week.
Foam roller self-massage 	May increase blood flow, relax tension in muscles and release painful trigger points; most of them travel well, too.	Daily or even multiple times per day, following the instructions on the particular product.
Downtime 	Making time for non-running activities boosts psychological recovery. Basic social interaction lowers levels of the stress hormone cortisol.	Join a running group so you can relax together – or meet non-running friends for a drink or a meal when you're really feeling the pressure of training.
Active recovery 	Cross-training boosts blood flow and prevents muscles and joints from stiffening up, and keeps you in shape without the heavy impact of running.	Schedule an active-recovery day after a long or intense run, or swap one in for an easy run on your training schedule if you're feeling sore, fatigued or injured.
Stretching and yoga 	Post-run stretching may lower the risk of hamstring and other injuries; yoga may reduce back pain, lower heart rate and blood pressure, and ease anxiety.	Immediately after a run, spend a few minutes stretching dynamically. Schedule yoga or more extended sessions for recovery days.
Sleep 	During sleep, your body repairs minor damage to your tissues, releases muscle-building growth hormone and replenishes your energy stores.	Most adults require between seven and nine hours. If you can go into a dark room at 3pm and fall asleep instantly, you're not getting enough shut-eye.

OFF THE CLOCK

Rates of recovery vary, says Sharp. But this is generally what occurs after a tough run



1 MINUTE

Your heart rate and body temperature drop and your breathing slows.



30 MINUTES

Your body releases proteins that repair muscular damage and form new mitochondria.



A FEW HOURS

White blood cells fight injury. Lysosomal enzymes break down damaged tissue.



TWO TO THREE DAYS

Your body has largely adapted to the stress of training – you're ready to run hard again.



SIX WEEKS

Your mitochondrial count may have doubled; your muscles have grown stronger. **RW**

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STAY FAST AND LOOSE

Some brisk moves will help you bounce back from hard runs

This active recovery routine from running coach Robyn LaLonde increases circulation, loosens muscles and flushes out soreness and fatigue – all in less than 15 minutes. Complete it on rest or easy-running days at least once a week and as many as three times per week. Start with a 90-second dynamic warm-up of standing trunk twists and leg swings. Next, do these five moves straight through as one circuit. Do two circuits.

ICE SKATERS

Stand with your feet hip-width apart, toes forward. Lower into a gentle squat, then bring your left foot diagonally behind your right leg and touch your toe down. Hold for one second, then push off your right foot in a jumping movement to the left. Bring the right foot diagonally behind the left, and repeat on that side. Continue to push left and right for 30 secs
—15-20 reps.



BACKWARD LUNGES

Step back with your right foot. Lower down until your left thigh is parallel to the floor and your right knee is close to (but not touching) the floor. Pause for two secs, then press your left heel into the floor and contract your quads and hamstrings to return to starting position. Repeat, alternating legs, for a minute.



WALKING SQUATS

Lower into a squat, bum back, head up and knees not passing beyond your toes. Take five steps to the right. Remain in the squat position and do five running-arm swings with each arm. Walk five steps to the left and repeat. Repeat one more time in each direction, for a total of two reps each way (about 45 secs in all).



PLANK WITH SINGLE-ARM EXTENSIONS

Start in a bent-arm plank position. Extend one arm straight in front while holding the rest of your body steady and taking long, slow breaths. Hold for 10 seconds, then bring your arm back down and lift the other one. Repeat three times on each arm for a total of one minute.



MOUNTAIN CLIMBERS

Get into a press-up position. Bring your right knee to your chest, inside your elbow, then return to the starting position. Do the same on the left, moving quickly; that's one rep. Repeat seven times. Do the exercise again but this time bring your knee outside your elbow. Repeat seven times for a total of one minute.

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www.runottawa.com

GEAR



Out for the season

*We pick out the winter kit that will ensure
you stay warm when the weather turns fierce*

New Balance Beacon

£130, newbalance.co.uk

Available in men's and women's versions (this is the women's), this is a sturdy, glow-in-the-dark jacket with extra reflectivity that will keep you seen and safe. It's also water- and wind-resistant





Arc'teryx Norvan

£270, arcteryx.com

Waterproof, windproof, incredibly durable and surprisingly light. Expensive, but an excellent piece of kit.



Patagonia Nano Air Vest

£130, patagonia.eu

A smart, soft and well-insulated number. If you choose one of the less vibrant colours you could wear this one in the pub.



LOOK FOR...

...wind-resistance at a minimum but, ideally, a completely windproof fabric such as Gore Windstopper. If your jacket is not high-vis, look for extensive reflective detailing.



Every Second Counts Sprint Jacket

£219, everysecondcounts.co.uk

A solid entry from this new sportswear brand. Wind-resistant, breathable and it wicks well. On sale from the end of November.



Men's jackets



Montane Fireball Verso Pull-on

£100, montane.co.uk

Good weatherproofing, thermal and breathable. Handy details include anti-odour material and thumbholes.



Pearl Izumi Fly Softshell Run Hoody

£89.99, madison.co.uk

A slim fit, but the fabric is stretchy and windproof. There are also internal mitts and a hood that doesn't block your view.



Asics Running Jacket

£200, asics.co.uk

Durable, extremely weatherproof, reflective and rip-resistant, this is a good investment. A little heavy so keep it for the worst weather.



2XU Hyoptik

£90, 2xushop.co.uk

Fast-wicking, quick-drying, thermal, ventilated, reflective, warm and it moves nicely with your body – this jacket has the lot.



Nike Shield Flash Max Jacket

£370, nike.com

Formidably weather-resistant, while the hundreds of coloured dots that make up the design are reflective. Peaked hood works well.



Berghaus Hypertherm Race Smock

£140, berghaus.com

A reversible jacket providing wind protection on one side and better cooling and breathability on the other. Feels light and airy.



Nike Aero loft 800

£120, nike.com

Tiny but mighty, this is filled with goose down to keep you warm while keeping the weight down. Ventilation is impressive, too.



Saucony Exo

£95, saucony.co.uk

The waxy feel isn't the most comfortable on bare arms, but the weatherproofing is remarkable for such a lightweight jacket.



Brooks Seattle Shell

£180, brooksrunning.co.uk

A low rear hem for extra bum coverage, bonded seams for extra waterproofing and the hood zips away into the collar.



Helly Hansen Aspire

£90, hellyhansen.com

Highly weather resistant rather than fully weatherproof; for days when it's not freezing but you still need a second layer.



Ronhill Vizion Storm

£125, ronhill.com

A slim but stretchy fit, three-layer shell for brilliant weather protection, a large chest pocket and a peaked, articulated hood.



Boom Boom Athletica Shribetsu

£130, boomboomathletica.com

Padded shoulders for running with a backpack and highly ventilated. The hood is designed to fit ponytails.



Lija Gathered Panel Jacket

£110, white-stone.co.uk

Semi-fitted design that nips in at the waist. This also has a mesh panel on the back for breathability and temperature control.



Nike Aero loft Flash

£160, nike.com/uk

This whole gilet is reflective, so you'll be lit up like a Christmas tree. Goose down provides insulation and ventilation is first-rate.



Women's jackets



Falke Insulation Vest

£140, netaporter.com

Primaloft insulation will keep your core warm, while a mesh panel running down the spine improves ventilation and breathability.



Ashmei Nightrunner Softshell Jacket

£200, ashmei.com

Well worth the investment: superb weather protection, a stylish but accommodating cut and solid temperature regulation.



Asics Running Jacket

£110, asics.co.uk

It's a short-cut jacket with a very slim fit, but the material is fully waterproof and extremely warm. Features snap fastenings on the collar.



LOOK FOR...

...a packable hood that won't tangle your hair when you're not using it; a gender-specific cut; a longer rear hem if you're body-conscious; and a fabric that resists or repels water.



MEN



2XU Wind Defense Thermal Compression Tights

£94.99, 2xu.com

Compression helps increase blood flow, while the material is wind- and water-resistant.



Puma PWR Warm Long Tight

£34.99, runnersneed.com

These are unspectacular but for the money you get decent reflective detailing, zipped ankles and a comfortable fit.

WOMEN



Brooks Greenlight Tights

£65, brooksrunning.co.uk

Reversible tights (plain design on the other side) with a 3.5" waistband for comfort. Elasticated ruching around the ankle.



Arc'Teryx Trino

£110, arcteryx.com

The backs of the knees have stretchy mesh panels, while the front of these tights is made from no-nonsense Windstopper material.



Asics Running Tight

£70, asics.co.uk

These comfortable camo-effect tights are a welcome change from the usual black design for men. There's a large thigh zip pocket.



New Balance Beacon Tight

£70, newbalance.co.uk

Glow-in-the-dark calf panels that you can charge under a light pre-run; laser-cut holes for ventilation and tons of reflectivity.



Oiselle Bolt Tights

£50 + shipping, oiselle.com

A gusseted crotch, mesh knee panels for ease of movement, seam-free construction and a fast drying weave. In short – total comfort.



Falke Stretch Jersey Leggings

£100, netaporter.com

Extremely comfortable compression tights. They also have minimal seams, a soft mesh and reflective details.



Salomon Endurance Tight

£60, salomon.com/uk

Panels at the back of the knees ensure the material won't bunch, there are three waist pockets and the tights are compressive.



Odlo Gliss AOP Tights

£60, odlo.com

These are designed to ensure they don't ride up. The polka-dot design is stylish and the mesh-gusseted crotch is a welcome touch.



Men's and women's tights



LOOK FOR...

...a wide waistband that will help distribute pressure; a gusseted crotch for comfort and modesty; rubber hems to secure the tights round the ankle; and anti-odour technology in the material.

MEN



Jack Wolfskin Funktional Tee

£55, jack-wolfskin.co.uk

The merino wool used to make this will keep you warm without making you overheat, and it's naturally antibacterial, too.



Odlo Blackcomb Evolution

£65, odlo.com

The minimal seams on this make it a chafe-free zone. The weave is highly breathable but warm enough to cope with winter chill.



Brooks Streaker

£70, brooksrunning.co.uk

Stylish and comfy enough to wear to the pub if you can rock the super-slim fit, it's extremely quick-drying and seam-free.



Icebreaker Oasis Crewe

£55, uk.icebreaker.com

A good option if you don't like too close a fit on a baselayer – this is forgiving without being loose. It offers UV protection, too.



Men's and women's baselayers



X-Bionic Energizer Mk II

£70, x-bionic.co.uk

Ribbed channels in the weave move sweat quickly away, while compressive panels across the shoulders promote better posture.



LOOK FOR...

...a fitted cut – it doesn't have to be extremely tight but it should not rumple underneath another layer; a quick-drying weave to avoid that cold, sticky feeling; and flatlock seams to reduce irritation.



Salomon Agile L/S Tee

£35, salomon.com/uk

Extremely light and featuring a cunning pocket in the back for keys and a travel card. Well ventilated and highly breathable.

WOMEN



Jack Wolfskin Dry 'N' Cosy Longsleeve

£50, jack-wolfskin.co.uk

Reassuringly thick but ergonomically cut, meaning you can wear it as a single layer or part of a combo. It's also extremely stretchy.



Ronhill Merino 200

£65, ronhill.com

A close-fitting but forgiving merino half-zip top that feels silky against the skin. This one offers excellent temperature regulation.



EDZ Merino 2000

£50, edzlayering.com

Merino wool gives this an opulent feel. The weave retains sweat but moves it away from the skin to keep you warm and dry.



Oiselle Flyte 2000

£43 + shipping, oiselle.com

Semi-fitted but not constrictive, this can be worn as a baselayer or, on warmer days, as a standalone garment. It's also light and soft.



MEN



Mammut Atacazo Zip Pull

£70, mammut.ch

This tight-fitting top should be used as a baselayer if you're self-conscious about your physique, but it's a soft and warm delight.



Brooks Dash Half Zip

£50, brooksrrunning.co.uk

A soft, standard-cut top that wicks well and features flatlocked seams. Also has thumb loops and a rear zip pocket.



Puma PWR Warm Half Zip

£39.99, prodirectrunning.com

This is very thick so could be worn without a baselayer in colder weather. Fleece on the inside and the outer is water-resistant.



Craft Weather Jersey

£90, craftsportswear.co.uk

A technical top with wind-resistant panels at the front. Also features integrated gloves and there's reflective detailing throughout.



Icebreaker Compass Zip

£120, uk.icebreaker.com

If it weren't for the zip you could wear this next to the skin. It's soft (80 per cent merino wool) and regulates temperature brilliantly.



Men's and women's long sleeve



LOOK FOR...

...a high-wicking and breathable material that will move sweat to the outside of the top; ventilation holes to promote air flow for temperature regulation; and a thermal weave for really cold days.



Mizuno Storm Windtop

£64.99, mizuno.eu/gb

The water-repellent coating and stretchy side panels add up to a top that's snug, weather-resistant and warm.

WOMEN



Asics Lite-show Neck Top

£55, asics.co.uk

The high crew neck and extra-long sleeves on this will keep the winter chill out, while there's a rear zip pocket and a slim cut for a close fit.



Salomon Park L/S Tee

£40, salomon.com/uk

Bamboo charcoal in the weave keeps you from ponging on the run, while the standard cut will have mass appeal.



Helly Hansen Aspire Norviz

£75, hellyhansen.com

This looks like a dull black but reflective panels show up brightly when light is shone on them. The high neck is a nice touch.



Crewroom North West Hoodie

£65, crewroom.co.uk

This top, which has soft brushed fabric, can be worn on its own or with another layer. A mesh panel in the hood helps disperse heat.


Patagonia Wind Shield Gloves

£32, Patagonia.com/eu

Water- and wind-resistant, with reinforced pads on the palms for grip. The thumb and index fingers are touch-screen compatible.



Running accessories


Petzl NAO Headtorch

£145, petzl.com

The technology in this extremely powerful torch automatically adjusts brightness and beam pattern as necessary.


Pearl Izumi Shine Wind Mitt

£29.99, madison.co.uk

Excellent value for money: a silicon palm for grip; high-vis, stowable mitt for bad weather; and a handy pocket for small items.


Million Mile Light

£18, millionmilelight.com

This is powered by motion so it's battery-free. It's also light, waterproof and can be seen from a distance of 200m.


Nathan Bandolier Vest

£19, sweatshop.co.uk

A slim, one-size-fits-all vest that takes the belt-and-braces approach to safety – it's both reflective and high-vis.


Ronhill Merino 200 Gloves

£20, ronhill.com

Incredibly soft feel, a snug fit and reflective detailing, and the merino will ensure your hands stay toasty without getting sweaty.


EDZ Merino Multitube

£18, edzlayering.com

A 50cm-long merino wool tube that can be worn as a neckwarmer, snood, hat, bandana, or balaclava. Breathes and wicks well, too.


LED Lenser SEO 7R Headtorch

£67.50, ledlenser-store.co.uk

A rechargeable headtorch that can project up to a distance of 130m. It also automatically adjusts light strength according to conditions.


Patagonia Wind Shield Beanie

£28, Patagonia.com/eu

A close-fitting thermal hat that has a peak to keep the rain out of your eyes; there are also ear flaps that fold up when not needed.


Gore Mythos Lady Beany

£44.99, goreapparel.co.uk

A low-cut, soft hat with Windstopper material across the forehead, ears and back of the neck. Provides excellent ventilation on top.


Buff Microfibre and Polar Hat

£22.75, buffwear.co.uk

A double-layer hat – weather-resistant on the outside, warm and fleecy inside. Also contains silver ions to cut down on odour.

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LET YOUR TRAINING LOOSE

ENJOY THE CHRISTMAS *RUSH*

They may not be ideal for PBs,
but these races will certainly
fill you with festive spirit





CLAUSE FOR CELEBRATION
Help set a new record

01

01 THE MEDICASH SANTA DASH

Liverpool
December 6

We say People come from all over to take part in this spectacular 5K event, which is the biggest festive fun run in the world. Last year, 8,500 Santas turned up and the goal this year is a mighty 10,000.

You say* 'The sight of thousands of fluffy-beards.' *Fiona Hanik**

Do it for... The enthusiastic post-race 'rehydration' in pubs that are rammed with 'athletes' in Santa suits.
santadash.co.uk

02 CHRISTMAS BUBBLE RUSH

Northwich
Cheshire, December 6

We say A fast 5K around the tree-lined avenues of Marbury Park in aid of St Luke's Cheshire Hospice. Christmas trees are on sale here, but you might want to buy yours after the race rather than huff and puff around the course with it strapped to your back.

You say 'It's frothy, man' *J2000*

Do it for... The fun of running through five-foot 'bubble walls'. It's like a bath and a race all in one. Honest.
runnersworld.co.uk/bubblerush

03 EDINBURGH CHRISTMAS 5K

Edinburgh
December 6

We say Judging by last year's photos, about half the field donned Christmas



WARDROBE MALFUNCTION
Santa would never let this happen

05

jumpers for this annual scamper around the Scottish capital. The emphasis is on fun, but that doesn't mean you can't heroically sprint past an old lady dressed as Mother Christmas in the final 20 metres.

You say 'Big thumbs up... you'd be hard pushed to be made to feel more welcome.' *ikkleginga*

Do it for... The kids. There's a Santa's grotto on site so they can meet the big guy and hassle him for stuff.
runnersworld.co.uk/edinburgh5K

04 BELFAST CITY SANTA DASH

Northern Ireland
December 6

We say Hundreds of Santas pack the streets for this jolly 2.5km dash through some of Belfast's busiest

shopping streets. The event, now in its fourth year, raises funds for disadvantaged children.

You say 'Great way to donate to a great cause.' *Paula Cee*

Do it for... The enormous amounts of fun and the opportunity to raise money for a good cause.
santadash.co.uk

05 WESTON PARK 10K CHRISTMAS RUN

Shropshire
December 6

We say A one-lap and not overly challenging course that takes runners around a site that's home to the V Festival in the summer. For any non-runners present there's a Christmas craft and food fair.

You say 'A great location and time of year for a first 10K.' *TeacherMom*

Do it for... Keeping the family happy. As well as a race there's a Christmas fair and a mini railway ride.
runnersworld.co.uk/westonpark10K

06 REINDEER STAMPEDE 5K

West Yorkshire,
December 6

We say Set in the cute model village of Saltaire, and run in aid of Epilepsy Action, this is one of the most Christmassy events you'll find. As well as receiving free reindeer antlers, you'll be serenaded by carol singers on the way round, welcomed over the line with Christmas hits on the tannoy and fed mulled wine, mince



DEER ME
They can run, but can they pull a sleigh?

pies and cake. If that doesn't get you in the festive spirit, nothing will.

You say 'Great fun and superb organisation.' *Paul Tranter*

Do it for... The snazzy headwear runnersworld.co.uk/reindeer

07 MINCE PIE TEN

East Sussex
December 6

We say You might want to do some hill training before tackling this multi-terrain 10-miler as it contains a serious incline. Make it to the top though and you'll be rewarded with stunning views of the English Channel, and at the end you get a well-stocked goody bag – and a mince pie.

You say 'Ho Ho Ho my God, what a hill!' *Simon Randall 3*

Do it for... The glory, the pie and the post-race massage.

runnersworld.co.uk/mincepie10

08 CHRISTMAS CRACKER

Warwickshire
December 12

We say This 10K or 20K through Warwickshire College and around some of the surrounding country lanes will test your seasonal cheer with a couple of climbs and the distinct possibility of some gloom. There are prizes for best fancy dress, so the simple Santa suit probably won't cut it.

You say 'Very muddy, very hilly & great atmosphere.' *Phil Smith 12*

Do it for... The strange festive foods, including mulled wine-flavoured tea. raceways.eu

LOOK CLOSELY
There's a serious
runner here –
somewhere



08

09 OLYMPIC PARK 10K

London
December 13

We say Organised by the Mo Farah Foundation, which raises funds for underprivileged communities, this 5K or 10K race takes runners through Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park in the shadow of the stadium where Farah won double gold in 2012. This is a quick and fun race, and finishers will get what organisers call 'a jazzy, Mo-Botting technical T-shirt'.

You say 'Motivation for the long winter months ahead!' *maireadfurlong1*

Do it for... Mo – to thank him for his great efforts on Super Saturday. olympicpark10k.com

10 SANTA SCRAMBLE

Avon
December 13

We say Entry for this 10K or 5K trail run up and over beautiful Brean Down includes a free Santa suit. There is also a 1km option for all ages and abilities. No suits are supplied for the 1km race, but fancy dress is encouraged.

You say 'A technical trail in a Santa suit? Sign me up.' *KeepTheFaith75*

Do it for... The novelty of running

on National Trust land while dressed as Father Christmas. runnersworld.co.uk/santasrubble

11 TORRINGTON CHRISTMAS CAPER

Devon
December 20

We say This one has it all: mud, forest, rivers and hills. It's also cheap as chips (£10), so if you're running short after buying pressies this will do nicely.

You say 'Great fun, wet and muddy.' *sadman*

Do it for... The ultimate office party recovery – wading as fast as you can through an icy, muddy river. runnersworld.co.uk/torringtoncaper

12 ELY NYE 10K

Cambridgeshire
December 31

We say This is a feisty tear-em-up through the streets of Little Downham, with finish-line beer to encourage you.

You say '700 runners pounding the streets, with a bagpiper to send you off and bring you up the incline.'

Alice Noyes

Do it for... Banking some brownie points before a night on the tiles. elyrunners.co.uk



06

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Race director Rob Piggott leads you through this flat and festive loop along the Hampshire coast.

START Runners gather by the Pyramid Centre, an indoor leisure complex on the seafront. It's close to Southsea Castle (A), which was built in 1544.

MILE 1 As you set off along Southsea prom, you quickly pass the South Parade Pier, before spotting the statue of 'The Yomper' outside the Royal Marines Museum. It commemorates the marines who fought in the Falklands War.

MILE 2 This is a tricky section, as you have to run right along the water's edge. Some runners have even lost a trainer in the gloopy mud.

MILE 8 One of the toughest parts of the course, with 400m of shingle to run across; a good tip is to stick to the top of the beach for a firmer footing.

MILE 10 You reach Hayling Island, where, in 1958, 12-year-old Peter Chilvers built what's regarded as the world's first windsurfing sailboard.

MILE 13 The Station Theatre marks the halfway point: here you turn and retrace your steps.

MILE 15 Even at this distance, you get a fine view of the 170m-high Spinnaker Tower (B), which sits at the entrance to Portsmouth Harbour.

MILE 20 The busy motorway is close by,

but Farlington Marshes are to your right. This 296-acre stretch of reclaimed land is a wildlife haven.

MILE 22 After you pass the Tudor Sailing Club, you'll be skirting the edge of Langstone Harbour. During the Second World War this estuary was used as a decoy site to misdirect German bombers.

FINISH It can be a hard final slog, as the wind that blows along this stretch of coast will be in your face. But the promise of hot soup – as well as a bottle of specially brewed race beer in the goody bag – should ease you over the line.

INSIDE STORY

Rob Piggott says: 'We started this race five years ago. We now have a 50K ultra, a half and a full marathon all on the same day. It's a flat course and as it's an out and back, you can see what's coming up as well as other runners on different parts of the course. It's held just before Christmas, so there's a festive feel. Many entrants dress up in Santa suits or as fairies. It's also a fundraiser for the RNLI charity. We have to tweak the course and the start time each year depending on tide times, so expect to get a soggy trainer on parts of the course which are run right on the shoreline. But it's mostly on firm paths, offering superb views across Langstone Harbour.'

● **Run it** The 2015 race is on December 20. Visit runnersworld.co.uk/Portsmouth-marathon

THE RUNDOWN

Portsmouth Coastal Waterside Marathon

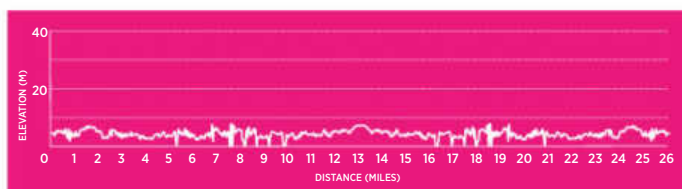
Portsmouth, Hampshire (2014 stats)

First man Anthony Clark 2:41:33

First woman Gemma Bragg 3:09:42

Finishing stats

- 2:30-3:00 1%
- 3:00-3:30 9%
- 3:30-4:00 27%
- 4:00-4:30 26%
- 4:30-5:00 20%
- 5:00-7:30 17%





GLASGOW BLISS

There was a time when the Glasgow Marathon attracted 11,000 runners. It can happen again

In the beginning...

In many ways, the fortunes of Glasgow's race mirror those of many city marathons that bit the dust in the 1980s after a flurry of excitement in the 1970s. The Glasgow Marathon began in 1979, two years before the inaugural London Marathon. Runners had to have run sub-3:00 to qualify, which meant only 63 entrants lined up on a damp October morning in George Square before completing a four-lap circuit: 58 finished.

Who raced?

In those early years, it was largely seasoned club runners who took part. The first male champion was Barry Watson, who had worn the GB vest in the Montreal Olympics marathon three years earlier. Leslie Watson, one of Scotland's finest endurance athletes, was the first and, indeed, only woman in the debut race. It didn't become a mass-participation event until it was rebranded the Scottish People's Marathon in 1982 and given a new route. In 1983, a problem with the suppliers of finishers' medals meant all but the top three in the various categories had to make do with a single rose as their reward. Entries

swelled to more than 11,000 in 1985 and a year later champion fell and mountain runner Stuart Kenny set a course record of 2:14:04.

What happened to it?

In 1987, entries dipped dramatically to 5,516. This was blamed on lack of TV coverage and sponsorship, as well as the waning of interest in marathons. Even offering prize money failed to save the race. It was

WHEN VESTS RULED
The start of the 1986 Glasgow Marathon



turned into a half marathon the next year, then became a 25K race and later reverted to a 13.1-miler, which it remains today. A Facebook campaign is aimed at restoring the full marathon to its former glory.

Why was it so good?

'I ran several of the early ones, including 1983,' recalls Colin Youngson, a runner and running history writer. 'I was fourth and helped Scotland narrowly win the title as the best competing nation. There were lots of excellent runners in those early races and we treated each other with respect, and further down the field there was a friendly, joking, supportive vibe, too. The crowds were great in the city and at the end, when we reached Glasgow Green. You would often hear shouts of, 'Go on yersel, big man!' and other typical Scottish expressions. Glasgow is a party town with lots of good pubs, so there was lots of drunken, knackered celebration afterwards.'

● Have you got a favourite event that has dropped off the race calendar? If so, drop us a line at editor@runnersworld.co.uk

Words Adrian Monti Photograph Graham MacIndoe



HOW IT WORKS

ROAD CLOSURES

Amy Dearing from the Southend Half Marathon explains how event organisers go about ensuring the roads you run along are free from traffic, and how they keep the locals happy

'We get 19 roads closed for our event each year; we have 140 volunteer marshals along the route. The roads are closed for the duration of the race from 15 minutes before the gun and for a maximum of three hours. However, the marshals have discretion to let cars through to relieve pressure, if it's safe.

We have to apply to the borough council for the

road-closure licence. The biggest challenge we face is advising residents who are affected. When the council agrees the road closures – normally six months in advance of the race – it issues an official road-closure notification, which we then have to photocopy, laminate and stick to lampposts at the end of every road along the route that will be affected by

the event. We also have to inform every business along the route, face to face, about the event and road closures. This includes amusement arcades, bed and breakfasts, hotels, cafes, restaurants, shops and churches. All residents who are directly affected are notified three times in writing in the lead-up to the event. It's a lot of boxes to tick!'



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RACE FINDER

THE BEST UK EVENTS IN DECEMBER

Your top rated

December's best races as voted for by you*

1

99%

TRAIL • RURAL
MUDCREW: THE SCROOGE

When? December 20

Where? Cornwall

Awash with mud, gloop, sludge and several chest-high water features, this race take you through the gorgeous Lost Gardens of Heligan. Filthy, but beautiful. **p109**

2

95%

TRAIL • RURAL • HILLY
ENDURANCELIFE CTS: DORSET

When? December 5

Where? Dorset

Choose from the 10K, half marathon, 26.2 or 33-mile ultra options and test your mettle on this hard-as-nails offroad along the Jurassic Coast. **p108**

3

94%

ROAD • URBAN • RURAL
STOCKPORT 10

When? December 6

Where? Cheshire

It'll probably be raining but who cares: the atmosphere is always wonderful and the race kicks off to the strains of the *Benny Hill* theme tune. An early festive cracker with a stupendous goody bag. **p109**

4

90%

ROAD • URBAN • RURAL
MILTON KEYNES WINTER HALF MARATHON

When? December 13

Where? Buckinghamshire

This race takes runners along the city's linear parks and the Grand Union Canal, somehow managing to create a countryside feel in an area better known for its concrete. **p109**

5

89%

RURAL • HILLY
HOG'S BACK ROAD RACE

When? December 6

Where? Surrey

When viewed from above the route in the Loseley Estate in Surrey forms the outline of a hog. Ninety per cent of this 55-year-old race takes place on the road, while the rest is gravel - grippy road shoes should cover it. **p109**

*Taken from RW online 2014 ratings

How to use Race Finder

It's pretty easy - just follow the key below. Calendars at the ready!

Race Finder lists UK races that take place during the month stated on the cover, at the least. This issue features races from **Wednesday, December 2 to Saturday, January 16**. Simply look up when you want to race and find that day's events listed by region. Info is provided by race organisers and may be edited because of space. Find more extensive listings and an interactive search tool at runnersworld.co.uk/events. Just log on and sign up!

Key to race entries

RACE NAME
5Ks, 10Ks, half marathons and marathons are clearly shown. Numbers only (eg 5, 20) represent the distance in miles.

RACE TYPE
The kind of terrain and surroundings: road, trail, hilly, flat, urban and rural.

ADDITIONAL RACES
The event offers more races than the one stated, such as shorter fun runs or a children's race.

LEICESTERSHIRE
*ROAD • URBAN • RURAL
LEICESTER MARATHON (+)
VENUE Victoria Park, Leicester, 9:15am **CONTACT** Christian Weikert-Picker: 0116 231 8484; christianweikert-picker@loros.co.uk www.leicestermarathon.org.uk **COST** £26/£29 C/D 30/9 E/D YES, £50

COST
The first figure is for entrants belonging to a UKA-affiliated running club. The second is for non-affiliated runners.

CLOSING DATE
Closing date for entries, if applicable.

ENTRY ON DAY
Is it possible to turn up, pay and run? If yes, and it costs more to do this, it's usually stated.

ORGANISER'S CONTACT DETAILS
Who you should speak to if you have any queries about the event.



RW online entry

Signing up for events marked with this flash couldn't be simpler.

► Go to runnersworld.co.uk/events and search for the race you want to enter by name.

► Click 'Enter Online'.

► Select the category of race you wish to enter (whether you are affiliated to a running club or non-affiliated).

► Enter your details and pay online.

► Then you'll be sent a confirmation email. It's as simple as that.

WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 2

LEICESTERSHIRE

*ROAD

THE 3RD LEICESTER CITY 5K WINTER SERIES RACE TWO

VENUE Victoria Park, London Road, Leicester, 7:30pm **CONTACT** Martin Burke: 01797 230 009; martin@nice-work.org.uk www.nice-work.org.uk **COST** £9/£11 E/D YES, +£1

THURSDAY DECEMBER 3

KENT

*ROAD

THE GRAVESSEND FLOODLIT 10K SERIES (+)

VENUE Cyclopark, The Tollgate, Wrotham Road, Gravesend, 7:30pm **CONTACT** Martin Burke: 01797 230 572; info@nice-work.org.uk www.nice-work.org.uk **COST** £9/£11 E/D YES, +£2

SATURDAY DECEMBER 5

DERBYSHIRE

*ROAD • FLAT

NO WALK IN THE PARK 5K (+)

VENUE Queen's Park, Cricket Pavilion, Chesterfield, 9:30am **CONTACT** John Cannon: 01246 566 458; 07902 249 316; j.cannon846@btinternet.com; northderbyshireirer.jimdo.com/ **COST** £3/£5 E/D ONLY

DORSET

*TRAIL • RURAL • HILLY

ENDURANCELIFE CTS DORSET (+)

VENUE Lulworth Cove, Wareham, 7am **CONTACT** James Barker: 01548 312 314; support@endurancelife.com; www.endurancelife.com/event-new.asp?series=82 **COST** £30 E/D NO

HAMPSHIRE

*TRAIL • RURAL

GRIM

VENUE Army Vehicle Testing Ground, Aldershot, 11am **CONTACT** John Larkin: info@grimchallenge.co.uk; www.grimchallenge.co.uk/grim-8/ **COST** TBC E/D NO

KENT

*TRAIL • RURAL

TRAILScape RAIL TO TRAIL SERIES - EAST: MARATHON (+)

VENUE St Michael's Church Hall, Rochester Road, Cuxton, 8:30am **CONTACT** hannah osborne: info@trailscape.co.uk; www.trailscape.co.uk **COST** £40 E/D NO

LONDON

*ROAD • FLAT

LONDON SANTA RUN 6K

VENUE Battersea Park, Wandsworth, London, 10am **CONTACT** Mike Gratton: 01252 373 797; mike@209events.com; www.209events.com **COST** £20 E/D NO

*ROAD

QEOP WINTER 10KM SERIES

VENUE Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, London, 9:30am **CONTACT** Craig Thornton: 07740 554 190; info@theraceorganiser.com; www.qeopaces.com **COST** £15/£17 E/D YES

SURREY

*TRAIL

ICEMAN (+)

VENUE Army Training Ground, Frimley, 10:20am **CONTACT** Human Race: 020 8391 3913; aces@humanrace.co.uk; humanrace.co.uk/events/off-road/iceman **COST** £46 E/D YES

WALES

*ROAD • URBAN • FLAT

PONTYCLUN SANTA FUN RUN

VENUE Ivor Arms, Brynsadler, Pontyclun, 10am **CONTACT** Henry Mehta: pontyclunfunrun@outlook.com; pontyclunfunrun.weebly.com **COST** £5.50 C/D 28/11 E/D YES, +£2

SUNDAY DECEMBER 6

AVON

*TRAIL • URBAN • FLAT

CHRISTMAS CRACKER 10K (+)

VENUE Weston College, Knightstone Road, Weston-super-Mare, 11am **CONTACT** Bryan Morley: cracker@westonac.co.uk; www.westonac.co.uk/christmascracker **COST** £13/£15 C/D 31/10 E/D NO

BEDFORDSHIRE

*ROAD • RURAL

BEDFORD HARRIERS HALF MARATHON

VENUE Wootton Upper School, Hall End Road, Wootton, 10am **CONTACT** BHHM Entries: 01234 307 013; hello@bedfordharriers.co.uk www.bedfordharriers.co.uk **COST** £18.50/£20.50 C/D 5/11 E/D NO

BERKSHIRE

*ROAD • URBAN • FLAT

ROC SEARCH READING SANTA RUN (+)

VENUE Forbury Gardens, Reading, 9am **CONTACT** David Gibbins: readingsantarun@btinternet.com; www.readingsantarun.co.uk/ **COST** - E/D YES

CHESHIRE

*TRAIL • FLAT

5K CHRISTMAS BUBBLE RUSH (+)

VENUE Marbury Country Park, Comberbach, Northwich, Noon **CONTACT** Melissa Newland: 01606 555 815; melissa.newland@stlukes-hospice.co.uk; www.stlukes-hospice.co.uk/events/christmasbubbleusher/ **COST** TBC C/D 4/12 E/D NO

•ROAD •URBAN •RURAL

HOKA ONE ONE STOCKPORT 10
VENUE Woodbank Stadium, Turncroft Lane, Offerton, Stockport, 10am **CONTACT** Alan Dilkes; stockport10@hotmail.co.uk; www.stk10.co.uk **COST** - **E/D** NO

•TRAIL

TATTON YULE YOMP
VENUE Egerton Youth Club, Mereheath Lane, Knutsford, 10am **CONTACT** tattyonyuleyomp.co.uk **COST** £15/£17 **E/D** NO

HAMPSHIRE

•TRAIL •RURAL

GRIM
VENUE Army Vehicle Testing Ground, Aldershot, 10:30am **CONTACT** John Larkin; info@grimchallenge.co.uk; www.grimchallenge.co.uk/grim-8/ **COST** TBC **E/D** NO

•TRAIL •RURAL

TADLEY RUNNERS XMAS 5K 5.2
VENUE Hurst Leisure Centre, Brimpton Road, Tadley, 11am **CONTACT** Barrie Tribe; 01189 816 735; 07771 609 509; trimon43@aol.com; www.tadleyrunners.co.uk **COST** £12/£14 **C/D** 2/12 **E/D** YES, +£1

•ROAD •RURAL •FLAT

VICTORY 10K
VENUE Mountbatten Centre, Northern Parade, Portsmouth, 11am **CONTACT** Peter Newton; 01489 781 438; 07748 115 406; victory10k@athleticsevents.co.uk; www.portsmouthathletic.co.uk **COST** £12/£14 **C/D** 1/12 **E/D** NO

KENT

•TRAIL •RURAL

MAIDSTONE HARRIERS 23RD TURKEY RUN
VENUE East Malling Research, New Road, East Malling, 11am **CONTACT** Michael White; maidstoneharriers.co.uk **COST** £17/£19 **C/D** 30/11 **E/D** NO

•ROAD •URBAN

THANET ROADRUNNERS AC ALAN GREEN MEMORIAL 10 MILE RACE
VENUE Westgate Pavilion, Sea Road, Westgate-on-Sea, 9:30am **CONTACT** Terry Brightwell; thanet10@thanetroadrunners.org.uk; www.thanetroadrunners.org.uk **COST** £16/£18 **C/D** 28/11 **E/D** YES, £20

LONDON

•ROAD •URBAN •FLAT

SANTA IN THE CITY
VENUE City Hall, Queens Walk, London, 11am **CONTACT** Mike Graddon; 01252 373 797; mike@209events.com; www.209events.com **COST** £25 **C/D** 3/12 **E/D** NO

•ROAD

THE MORNINGTON CHASERS REGENT'S PARK GRAND PRIX 10K WINTER SERIES RACE THREE
VENUE Regent's Park, Start location is near The Hub, London, 9:10am **CONTACT** Martin Burke; 01797 230 009; martin@nice-work.org.uk; www.nice-work.org.uk **COST** £15/£17 **C/D** 30/9 **E/D** YES, £20

MIDDLESEX

•ROAD •URBAN •FLAT

PERIVALE 5 (+)
VENUE Perivale Park Athletics Track, Stockdove Way, Greenford, 10am **CONTACT** Fiona Kennedy; 020 8997 4872; laurence@esm.org.uk; www.esm.org.uk **COST** £11/£13 **C/D** 29/11 **E/D** NO

NORTHUMBERLAND

•TRAIL •RURAL •FLAT

HEXHAM RACECOURSE MARATHON (+)
VENUE Hexham Racecourse, High Yarridge, Hexham, 9:30am **CONTACT** Melanie Horan; melaniehoran@hotmail.com; www.northeastmarathonclub.co.uk **COST** £20/£22 **C/D** 22/11 **E/D** NO

SCOTLAND

•TRAIL

EDINBURGH CHRISTMAS 5K RUN
VENUE Inverleith Park, Inverleith, Edinburgh, 9:30am **CONTACT** Terry Crossley; 0131 336 3620; terry@greatscottsevents.org.uk; www.greatscottsevents.org.uk **COST** £20 **E/D** YES

SHROPSHIRE

•ROAD •RURAL

WESTON PARK 10K CHRISTMAS RUN
VENUE Weston Park, Weston Under Lizard, Shifnal, 10am **CONTACT** Tony Talbot; 07812 858 355; talbottony@googlemail.com; www.kickassendurance.co.uk **COST** £20 **C/D** 6/12 **E/D** YES, +£5

SOMERSET

•TRAIL •RURAL •HILLY

FULL MONTY-CUTE 10
VENUE Ham Hill Centre, Ham Hill Country Park, Stoke Sub Hamdon Nr Yeovil, 10:30am **CONTACT** Martin Cook; 01460 72505; martin.cook123@btinternet.com; www.fullmontycute.btck.co.uk **COST** £9/£11 **C/D** 31/10 **E/D** NO

STAFFORDSHIRE

•TRAIL

NEWCASTLE DALES DASH 10K
VENUE Apedale Community Country Park, Loomer Road, Chesterton, 11am **CONTACT** William Barker; 01782 720 027; 07754 172 801; w.f.barker@btopenworld.com **COST** £7/£9 **E/D** YES, +£2

•TRAIL

RUDOLPH RUN
VENUE Tamworth Castle Grounds, The Holloway, Tamworth, 10:30am **CONTACT** Jenni Dawson; 01543 434 542; jenni.dawson@stgileshospice.com; www.stgileshospice.com **COST** £12 **C/D** 4/12 **E/D** YES

SURREY

•ROAD •FLAT

BEDDINGTON PARK FESTIVE 10K CHARITY FUN RUN
VENUE Beddington Park, Church Road, Wallington, 10am **CONTACT** Mark Caswell; 07977 831 519; mark.caswell@btinternet.com; www.mccpromotions.com **COST** £12 **C/D** 1/12 **E/D** YES

•RURAL •HILLY

HOG'S BACK ROAD RACE
VENUE Loseley House, Stakescorner Lane, Guildford **CONTACT** hogsbacrun.co.uk **COST** £17/£19 **C/D** - **E/D** -

SUSSEX

•TRAIL •URBAN •RURAL

MINCE PIE TEN MILE
VENUE Peacehaven Leisure Centre, Greenwich Way, Peacehaven, 11am **CONTACT** Hilary Humphreys; 07817 783 121; mincepie@seafordstriders.org.uk; www.seafordstriders.org.uk/Newsite/mince-pie-ten-mile **COST** £12/£14 **C/D** 28/11 **E/D** YES, £16

•TRAIL •RURAL

WORTHING STRIDERS DOWNLAND DEVIL 9 MILE
VENUE Coombes Farm, Coombes, Steyning, 10am **CONTACT** Peter Wirtzfeld; 01903 755 266; cobbel@btinternet.com; www.worthingstriders.co.uk **COST** £10/£12 **C/D** 2/12 **E/D** YES, +£1

WALES

•ROAD •RURAL

VALE OF CLWYD HALF MARATHON
VENUE Cae Nant, Llandyrnog, Denbigh, 10am **CONTACT** Joe Cooper; 07875 404 922; joe.fitness@yahoo.com; www.out-fit.co.uk **COST** £19/£21 **C/D** 28/11 **E/D** NO

YORKSHIRE

•TRAIL

EPILEPSY ACTION REINDEER STAMPEDE 5K (+)
VENUE Roberts Park, Higher Coach Road, Saltair, 10am **CONTACT** Carl Foster; 0113 210 8797; events@epilepsy.org.uk; www.epilepsy.org.uk/involved/reindeer-stampede **COST** £12.50 **E/D** YES, +£2

SATURDAY DECEMBER 12

CUMBRIA

•TRAIL •RURAL

PETZL NIGHT RUNNER - GRIZEDALE FOREST
VENUE Grizedal Visitor Centre, Hawkshead, 7pm **CONTACT** Chris Kilchin; info@epicsevents.co.uk; www.thenightrunner.com **COST** £25 **E/D** NO

SUSSEX

•ROAD •URBAN •FLAT

SANTA DASH BRIGHTON
VENUE Hove Lawns, Brighton, 10:30am **CONTACT** John Larkin; info@inmotionsport.com; www.santadashbrighton.co.uk/ **COST** TBC **E/D** YES, £20 unaffiliated

WARWICKSHIRE

•ROAD •RURAL

CHRISTMAS CRACKER (+)
VENUE Moreton Morrell Centre, Moreton Morrell, Warwick, 10am **CONTACT** Tracy Morgan; 07711 349 592; office@raceways.eu; www.raceways.eu **COST** £16/£18 **C/D** 5/12 **E/D** YES, +£2

SUNDAY DECEMBER 13

AVON

•TRAIL •RURAL

BREAN DOWN 5/10K SANTA SCRAMBLE (+)
VENUE Brean Down, Brean, Burnham, 10am **CONTACT** Donna King; donna@aspirerunningevents.co.uk; www.aspirerunningevents.co.uk/project/brean-down-santa-scramble-1000-am-sunday-13th-december-2015/ **COST** £13/£15 **E/D** YES, +£2

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

•ROAD •URBAN •RURAL

MILTON KEYNES WINTER HALF MARATHON
VENUE Newlands, Milton Keynes, 10am **CONTACT** Dave Quinn; info@fgevents.co.uk; fgevents.co.uk/mk-winter-half-marathon-2015/ **COST** £13 **C/D** 13/11 **E/D** NO

DERBYSHIRE

•ROAD •URBAN •RURAL •FLAT

DERBY RUNNER BOLSOVER 10K
VENUE Bolsover, 10:30am **CONTACT** Colin Sinnott; 01246 864 361; colin.sinnott@yahoo.com; northderbyshirer.jimdo.com/ **COST** £11/£13 **C/D** 1/12 **E/D** NO

ESSEX

•ROAD •URBAN •FLAT

THE SOUTHDOWN 5 MILE RUDOLPH RUN (+)
VENUE Adjacent to Ness Road on the Esplanade, Southend-on-sea, 10:30am **CONTACT** Martin Burke; 01797 230 009; martin@nice-work.org.uk; www.nice-work.org.uk **COST** £13/£15 **C/D** 8/12 **E/D** YES, +£2

HAMPSHIRE

•ROAD •RURAL •FLAT

5K SANTA FUN RUN

Where's the action?

December's 111 events broken down by region

North / 17

Midlands / 13

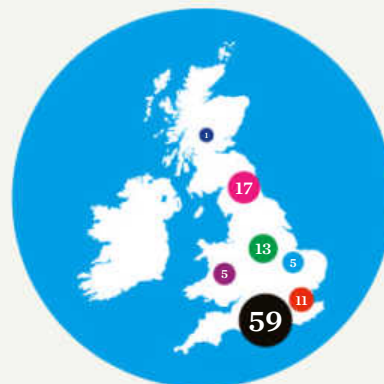
East / 5

South / 59

Southwest / 11

Scotland / 1

Wales / 5



VENUE Southsea, Rock Gardens, South Parade, Portsmouth, 11am **CONTACT** Rob Piggott; 07780 675 747; fitprorob@hotmail.com; https://fitprorob.primo-solutions.co.uk/ps/event PortsmouthRNLISantaFamily510kFunRuns2015 **COST** £18 **E/D** YES, +£7

•TRAIL •RURAL

HEARTBREAKER TAILWIND 10
VENUE Sandy Balls Holiday Park, Godshill, Fordingbridge, 10am **CONTACT** Online Online; 01725 557 114; jriles@racenewforest.co.uk; www.racenewforest.co.uk **COST** £17/£19 **C/D** 6/12 **E/D** NO

LONDON

•TRAIL

CAPITAL RUNNERS RICHMOND PARK CHRISTMAS 10K (+)
VENUE Richmond Park, Race starts in the Park adjacent to the car park at the Sheen Gate entrance, London, 10am **CONTACT** Martin Burke; 01797 230 009; martin@nice-work.org.uk; www.nice-work.org.uk **COST** £16/£18 **C/D** 9/12 **E/D** YES, £20

•ROAD •FLAT

OLYMPIC PARK 5K & 10K WITH MO FARAH
VENUE Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, Stratford, London, 10am **CONTACT** Run Through; info@runthrough.co.uk; www.olympicpark10k.com **COST** £22/£24 **E/D** NO

•ROAD •FLAT

REGENT'S PARK 10K
VENUE Regent's Park, London, 9:30am **CONTACT** Craig Thornton; 07740 554 190; info@theraceorganiser.com; www.theraceorganiser.com **COST** £14/£16 **E/D** YES

OXFORDSHIRE

•ROAD •RURAL •FLAT

ANDY READING 10K (+)
VENUE Bicester Sports Association HQ, Chesterton, Bicester, 10:30am **CONTACT** Adrian Weeks; andyreading10km@gmail.com; www.alchester-runningclub.co.uk/?page_id=202 **COST** £13/£15 **C/D** 10/12 **E/D** NO

SHROPSHIRE

•ROAD •FLAT

TELFORD 10K (+)
VENUE Telford International Centre, Telford Town Park, Telford, 11:30am **CONTACT** Dave Mansbridge; telford10k@yahoo.co.uk; www.telfordathleticclub.co.uk/races/telford-10k **COST** £10.50/£12.50 **C/D** 20/11 **E/D** NO

WALES

•ROAD •RURAL

CLWYDIAN SANTA RUN
VENUE Coed Moel Famau, Moel Famau Country Park, Mold, 10am **CONTACT** Ffion White; 01824 704 087; 07900 576 718; 07769 958 671; info@bespokefitnessandevents.co.uk; www.bespokefitnessandevents.co.uk **COST** £15 **C/D** 13/12 **E/D** YES, +£5

WORCESTERSHIRE

•ROAD •FLAT

WORCESTER WINTER RUN 10KM
VENUE Bottom Copenhagen St, Worcester, 9:30am **CONTACT** Nathan Poolton; dorstonerunner@hotmail.com; www.peakperformanceevents.co.uk **COST** £13 **C/D** 12/11 **E/D** NO

YORKSHIRE

•TRAIL •RURAL

HARDMOORS 26.2 ROSEBERRY TOPPING (+)
VENUE Guisborough Sea Cadets, Belmangate, Guisborough, 8am **CONTACT** Jonathan Steele; 01937 830 617; 07909 797 872; info@hardmoors110.org.uk; 262.hardmoors110.org.uk/cms/?q=node/39 **COST** £30 **E/D** YES, +£5

•TRAIL

LEEDS CHRISTMAS 10K CHALLENGE
VENUE John Charles Stadium, Middleton Grove, Leeds, 10:30am **CONTACT** Laura Allen; races@fairplayevents.co.uk; www.fairplayevents.co.uk **COST** £12.50/£15 **E/D** YES, +£5

THURSDAY DECEMBER 17

AVON

•ROAD •URBAN •FLAT

WESTON PROM 5M - RACE 4 OF 9
VENUE Bay Cafe, Tropicana, Marine Parade, Weston-super-Mare, 7:30pm **CONTACT** Malcolm Gammon; promrun@westonac.co.uk; www.westonac.co.uk/promrun **COST** £4/£6 **C/D** 17/12 **E/D** YES

FRIDAY DECEMBER 18

LONDON

•ROAD

BROOKS, SERPENTINE LAST FRIDAY OF THE MONTH 5K
VENUE The Bathouse (not the Bandstand), Hyde Park, London, 12:30pm **CONTACT** Malcolm French; 020 8422 3900; f1otm5k@serpentine.org.uk; www.serpentine.org.uk/pages/f1otm5k.html **COST** - **E/D** NO

SATURDAY DECEMBER 19

LONDON

•ROAD •URBAN •FLAT

RUNTHROUGH OLYMPIC PARK VELO 5K & 10K (+)
VENUE Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, Abercrombie Rd, London, 10am **CONTACT** Run Through; info@runthrough.co.uk; www.runthrough.co.uk/?event=leevalley-olympic-5k-10k-december **COST** £15 **E/D** NO

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

•TRAIL •FLAT

NEWARK SHOWGROUND CHRISTMAS CHALLENGE
VENUE Scence and Devon Park, Boundary Road, Newark, 10:30am **CONTACT** Adam Holland; 07795 250 902; tango5tavy@yahoo.co.uk; https://www.facebook.com/events/90614 984 611215/ **COST** £20/£22 **C/D** 5/12 **E/D** YES, +£10

SUSSEX

•TRAIL

THE 10TH ANNIVERSARY CHRISTMAS PUDDING DASH (+)
VENUE Ashburnham Place, Battle, 10:30am **CONTACT** Martin Burke; 01797 230 009; info@nice-work.org.uk; www.nice-work.org.uk **COST** £12/£14 **C/D** 16/12 **E/D** YES, +£2

SUNDAY DECEMBER 20

AVON

•TRAIL •RURAL

AVON VALLEY 5/10K SANTA DASH 2015 (+)
VENUE Avon valley Adventure & Wildlife Park, Pixash Lane, Bath Road, Keynsham, Bristol, 11am **CONTACT** Donna King; donna@aspirerunningevents.co.uk; www.aspirerunningevents.co.uk/project/avon-valley-adventure-wildlife-park-2015-santa-dash/ **COST** £11/£13 **E/D** YES, +£2

BERKSHIRE

•TRAIL •RURAL

MUDDY WELLY RUN (+)
VENUE Wellington College, Crowthorne, 10am **CONTACT** Andy Macaskill; andy@mysportingtimes.com; www.muddywelly.com **COST** £18 **E/D** NO

CORNWALL

•TRAIL •RURAL

MUDDREW: THE SCROOGE
VENUE Lost Gardens of Heligan PL26 GEN, 10:30am **CONTACT** 07840681649; http://mudcrew.co.uk/event/the-scrooge/ **COST** £26/£28 **E/D** -

DERBYSHIRE

•TRAIL

GET ACTIVE 5K SANTA DASH
VENUE Darley Park, Darley Abbey, Derby, 11am **CONTACT** Danielle De Simone; 07964 017 113; danielle.desimone@autismeastmidlands.org.uk; autismeastmidlands.org.uk/get-active-5k-santa-dash **COST** £12 **C/D** 10/12 **E/D** YES

DEVON

•TRAIL •RURAL •HILLY

TORRINGTON CHRISTMAS CAPER 2015
VENUE Torrington Rugby Club, Hatchmoor Rd, Torrington, 11am **CONTACT** TAAC Secretary; 01805 938 125; al6296@myopen.ac.uk; www.torringtonaac.org **COST** £10 **E/D** YES, +£2

ESSEX

•ROAD •URBAN

DAWN TO DUSK SUNLIGHT ULTRA (+)

VENUE Woodford Bridge Road, Ilford, Redbridge, 8am
CONTACT Harmander Singh; 07958 94 6868; info@sikhshintheity.org; www.sikhshintheity.org COST £30 C/D 27/11 E/D YES, +£5

HAMPSHIRE

•TRAIL •RURAL •FLAT

PORTSMOUTH COASTAL WATERSIDE MARATHON

VENUE The Pyramids Centre, Clarence Esplanade, Portsmouth, 9:15am CONTACT Rob Pigott; 07780 675 747; fitprob@hotmail.com; https://fitprob.primo-solutions.co.uk/ps/event/ThePortsmouthFestiveRunningFestival COST £34 C/D 1/12 E/D NO

KENT

•TRAIL •RURAL

KENT CHRISTMAS CRACKER 5 (+)

VENUE Fowlmead Country Park, Sholden, Nr Deal, 10:30am
CONTACT Martin Burke; 01797 230 009; info@nice-work.org.uk; www.nice-work.org.uk COST £12/E14 E/D YES, +£2

LANCASHIRE

•TRAIL •RURAL •FLAT

RUDOLF RED NOSE 5 MILE

VENUE Blackpool Fire Station, Forest Gate, Blackpool, 11am
CONTACT David Waywell; 01253 932 715; 07762 283 626; waywell.dave@hotmail.co.uk; www.weshamroadrunners.co.uk COST £7/E9 C/D 13/12 E/D NO

•TRAIL •RURAL

SANTA DASH TRAIL RACE

VENUE Curley's Dinning Rooms and Fisheries, Horwich, Bolton, 10am CONTACT Stewart Jones; 07581 733 604; madbullevents@outlook.com; www.madbullevents.com COST £8 E/D YES, +£2

LONDON

•TRAIL

RUNTHROUGH GREENWICH PARK 5K & 10K

VENUE Greenwich Park, Greenwich, London, 9:30am
CONTACT Ben Green; info@runthrough.co.uk; www.runthrough.co.uk/?event=august-2015-greenwich-5k-10k COST - E/D NO

WILTSHIRE

•TRAIL •RURAL

WINTER SOLSTICE RUN (+)

VENUE Chiseldon Recreation Ground, Norris Close, Chiseldon, 11am CONTACT Simon Lovett; Simonlovett1977@gmail.com; www.werun4.co.uk COST £13.50 E/D YES, +£1.50

SATURDAY DECEMBER 26

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

•ROAD •URBAN

AYLESBURY BOXING DAY 5K

VENUE Market Square, Aylesbury, 9:45am CONTACT alan.roberts; 01908 254 261; 01296 770 471; 07818 871 082; runneralan1964@yahoo.co.uk; www.voacac.org.uk COST £8/E10 C/D 15/12 E/D YES, +£1

ESSEX

•TRAIL •RURAL

CROWN TO CROWN 5K

VENUE Westley Heights Country Park, High Road, Langdon Hills, Basildon, 11am CONTACT Peter Bates; 01268 768 082; www.pitsearunningclub.org.uk COST £2 E/D ONLY

KENT

•TRAIL •RURAL

THE 41ST SALTWOOD BOXING DAY RUN

VENUE The Green, Saltwood, Hythe, Noon CONTACT Martin Burke/ Greg Boorman; 01797 230 009; martin@nice-work.org.uk; www.nice-work.org.uk COST £2 E/D YES

SURREY

•TRAIL •RURAL

BOXING DAY RUN

VENUE Devil's Punch Bowl, London Rd, Hindhead, 11am CONTACT Matt Dellar; 07979 788 711; matted@activepresentations.co.uk; www.boxingdayrun.org COST £11 C/D 18/12 E/D YES, +£2

WALES

•ROAD •RURAL •FLAT

GLYNNEATH BOXING DAY 5 MILE ROAD RACE

VENUE Glynneath Social Club & Institute Ltd, 74 High Street, Glynneath, 11am CONTACT Dai Richards; 01639 722 508; info@glynneath5.com; www.glynneath5.com COST £11/E13 C/D 20/12 E/D YES, £15

SUNDAY DECEMBER 27

CAMBRIDGESHIRE

•ROAD •RURAL

WATERSIDE 10KM ROAD RACE

VENUE, 10am CONTACT Keith Ritchie; 07539 213 097; k.ritchie2@ntlworld.com; www.nicetirevents.com COST - E/D NO

GLOUCESTERSHIRE

•TRAIL •RURAL •HILLY

SEVEN SINS CHALLENGE SUN 27TH DEC 2015

VENUE Wenford Picnic Site, New Road off A48 Nr Blakeney, Forest of Dean, 10am CONTACT Andy Maxted; 07779 405 574; andymax37@hotmail.co.uk; www.trimaxevents.com COST £15 C/D 23/12 E/D YES, +£5

KENT

•ROAD •RURAL

END OF YEAR 10M

VENUE Staplehurst Village Centre, High St, Staplehurst, 10am CONTACT Sandie Hawkins; 07980 705 961; runningandriding@fmail.net; www.runningandriding.co.uk COST £12/E14 C/D 20/12 E/D YES, £15

LANCASHIRE

•ROAD •URBAN •RURAL

RIBBLE VALLEY 10K INC NORTHERN ATHLETICS 10K CHAMPIONSHIPS

VENUE Roefield Leisure Centre, Clitheroe, 10am CONTACT Matt Wood; matt@eightlane.org; events.eightlane.org/event/ribble-valley-10k/ COST

WARWICKSHIRE

•ROAD •RURAL •HILLY

TEMPO 10K WINTER ROAD RACE 3

VENUE Ilmington Sports & Social Club, Mickleton Road, Ilmington, Stratford-upon-avon, 10:30am CONTACT Sarah Bland; 01789 267 337; 07717 795 333 Rob; info@tempoevents.co.uk; www.tempoevents.co.uk COST £10/E12 E/D YES, +£2

WILTSHIRE

•TRAIL •RURAL

PLAIN CRAZY

VENUE Land Warfare Centre, Imber Road, Warminster, 11am CONTACT ted wilson; 01985 300 552; wiltspoocher@hotmail.com; warminsterbritishlegion.co.uk COST £15/E17 E/D YES, +£2

MONDAY DECEMBER 28

GLOUCESTERSHIRE

•ROAD

SEVEN SINS IMMORTAL SINNER RUN, FOREST OF DEAN MON 28TH DEC 2015 (+)

VENUE Wenford Picnic Site, New Road Blakeney, Parkend, 10am CONTACT Andrea; 07788 716 687; trimaxevents@hotmail.co.uk; atnd1/228110 COST £25 E/D ONLY

HERTFORDSHIRE

•ROAD •URBAN •RURAL

BUNTINGFORD YEAR END 10M

VENUE Fremam College, Bowling Green Lane, Buntingford, 10:30am CONTACT Richard Dajda; secretary@roystonrunners.co.uk; www.roystonrunners.co.uk COST £17/E19 E/D NO

ISLE OF WIGHT

•TRAIL •RURAL •HILLY

THE ABOMINABLE SNOWMAN TOUGH 10K (+)

VENUE Cheverton Farm, Cheverton Shute, Newport, 10:30am CONTACT Gareth Shilton; info@gpsport.org; www.snowman10k.co.uk/ COST £10 C/D 14/12 E/D YES, +£5

KENT

•TRAIL •RURAL

CAMBRIDGE HARRIERS CROSS COUNTRY CHAMPIONSHIP

VENUE 58A/60 Glenhurst Avenue, Bexley, noon CONTACT Clem Dixon; clem.dixon@fmail.net COST £3 E/D ONLY

SUFFOLK

•TRAIL •RURAL

GREAT BARROW CHALLENGE - TRIPLE TIPPLE - DAY 1 (+)

VENUE Suffolk Academy, Church Lane, Bury St Edmunds, 8am CONTACT Glen Moulds; 01284 810 446; info@suffolkacademy.com; www.theGBC.co.uk COST £28 E/D YES, +£2

SURREY

•TRAIL •RURAL •FLAT

PHOENIX YEAR END MARATHON (THAMES PATH)

VENUE Elmbridge Xcel Leisure Centre (Back Entrance), Waterside Drive, Walton-on-Thames, 9am CONTACT Rik Vercoe; 07949 273 732; rikvercoe@gmail.com; www.phoenixrunning.co.uk COST £25/E27 C/D 21/12 E/D NO

TUESDAY DECEMBER 29

SUFFOLK

•TRAIL •RURAL

GREAT BARROW CHALLENGE - TRIPLE TIPPLE - DAY 2 (+)

VENUE Suffolk Academy, Church Lane, Bury St Edmunds, 8am CONTACT Glen Moulds; 01284 810 446; info@suffolkacademy.com; www.theGBC.co.uk COST £25 E/D YES, +£5

WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 30

SUFFOLK

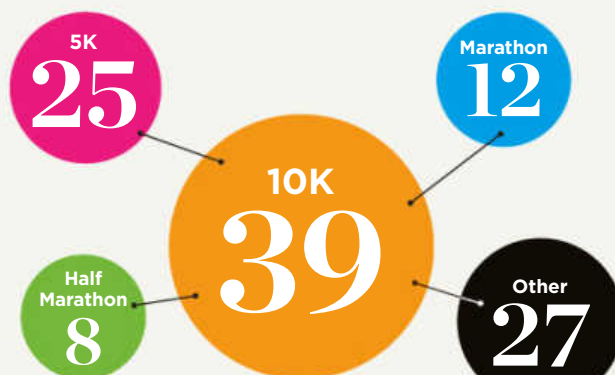
•TRAIL •RURAL

GREAT BARROW CHALLENGE - TRIPLE TIPPLE - DAY 3 (+)

VENUE Suffolk Academy, Church Lane, Bury St Edmunds, 8am CONTACT Glen Moulds; 01284 810 446; info@suffolkacademy.com; www.theGBC.co.uk COST £25 E/D YES, +£5

Going the distance

December's 111 events broken down by distance



THURSDAY DECEMBER 31

CAMBRIDGESHIRE

•ROAD •RURAL •FLAT

ELY NEW YEAR'S EVE 10K

VENUE Village Hall & Cricket Club, Little Downham, Ely, 11am CONTACT Kate Shepherd; info@newyearseve10k.co.uk; www.newyearseve10k.co.uk COST TBC E/D NO

ESSEX

•TRAIL •URBAN •RURAL •FLAT

FLITCH WAY NYE MARATHON

VENUE Discovery Centre, Great Notley, Braintree, 10am CONTACT Lindley Chambers; 07809 330 900; admin@challenge-running.co.uk; www.challenge-running.co.uk COST £35/E37 E/D NO

FRIDAY JANUARY 1

KENT

•TRAIL •RURAL

THE LAMBERHURST NEW YEAR'S DAY 10K (+)

VENUE Lamberhurst Village Hall (just off the A21), Lamberhurst, 11am CONTACT Martin Burke; 01797 230 009; martin@nice-work.org.uk; www.nice-work.org.uk COST £14/E16 C/D 21/12 E/D YES, +£2

SURREY

•TRAIL •RURAL •HILLY

TRIONIUM KNACKER CRACKER 10K

VENUE The Old Fort, Top of Box Hill, Box Hill, 11am CONTACT Robert McCaffrey; knackercracker@trionium.com; www.trionium.com/knackercracker COST £34/E36 C/D 1/1 E/D NO

SUSSEX

•TRAIL •RURAL

HANGOVER 5M (+)

VENUE Hillbarn Recreation Ground, Hillbarn Lane, Worthing, 11:30am CONTACT Harris David; 01903 716 920; 07942 816 507; dharris@uwclub.net; www.goring-roadrunners.org.uk COST £3/E4 C/D 11/12 E/D YES, £5

YORKSHIRE

•TRAIL •RURAL

HARDMOORS 30 (+)

VENUE Fylingdales Village Hall, Station Road, Robin Hoods Bay, 9am CONTACT Jonathan Steele; 01937 830 677; 07909 797 872; info@hardmoors10.org.uk; www.hardmoors10.org.uk COST

SATURDAY JANUARY 2

DERBYSHIRE

•ROAD •FLAT

NO WALK IN THE PARK 5K (+)

VENUE Queen's Park, Cricket Pavilion, Chesterfield, 9:30am CONTACT Colin Sinnott; 01246 864 361; 07749 860 685; nwbysrc@yahoo.co.uk; northderbyshirerc.jimdo.com/ COST £3/E5 E/D ONLY

LONDON

•ROAD

GEOP WINTER 10KM SERIES

VENUE Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, London, 9:30am CONTACT Craig Thornton; 07740 554 190; info@theraceorganiser.com; www.geopaces.com COST £15/E17 E/D YES

SUNDAY JANUARY 3

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

•TRAIL

CLIVEN CROSS COUNTRY

VENUE National Trust, Cliveden House, Taplow, 10am CONTACT Nicholas Cole; cliveden@burnhamjoggers.org.uk; burnhamjoggers.org.uk/clivedenxc/ COST £14/E16 E/D YES, +£2

HAMPSHIRE

•TRAIL

SOMERLEY CHARITY 10K (+)

VENUE Somerley Estate, Ringwood, 11am CONTACT Becky Chalk; 01202 703 198; fundraising@autismwessex.org.uk; autismwessex.org.uk/event_calendar/view/somerley-10k-run COST £15 C/D 31/12 E/D YES, +£5

YORKSHIRE

•TRAIL •RURAL

OXSPRING HUNSHLF AMBLE

VENUE Waggon & Horses Pub, Sheffield Road, Oxspring, Sheffield, 10:30am CONTACT Steve Dickinson; 01226 733 383; 07850 445 613; steve@osi.uk.com COST £5/E7 C/D 31/12 E/D YES

WEDNESDAY JANUARY 6

LEICESTERSHIRE

•ROAD

THE 3RD LEICESTER CITY 5K WINTER SERIES RACE THREE

VENUE Victoria Park, London Road, Leicester, 7:30pm CONTACT Martin Burke; 01797 230 009; martin@nice-work.org.uk; www.nice-work.org.uk COST £9/E11 E/D YES, +£1

THURSDAY JANUARY 7

KENT

•ROAD

THE GRAVESEND FLOODIT 10K SERIES (+)

VENUE Cyclopark, The Tollgate, Wrotham Road, Gravesend, 7:30pm CONTACT Martin Burke; 01797 230 009; 01797 230 572; info@nice-work.org.uk; www.nice-work.org.uk COST £9/E11 E/D YES, +£2

SUNDAY JANUARY 10

GLOUCESTERSHIRE

•TRAIL •RURAL

NAUNTON NEARLY 19

VENUE Naunton Village Hall, Naunton, 9:30am CONTACT Kurt Dusterhoff; info@cotswoldrunning.co.uk; www.cotswoldrunning.co.uk COST £23/E25 E/D NO

LONDON

•ROAD

THE MORNINGTON CHASERS REGENT'S PARK

VENUE Regent's Park, Start location is near The Hub, London, 9:10am CONTACT Martin Burke; 01797 230 009; martin@nice-work.org.uk; www.nice-work.org.uk COST £15/E17 C/D 30/9 E/D YES, £20

OXFORDSHIRE

•ROAD •RURAL •HILLY

WOODCOTE 10K

VENUE Woodcote Village Hall, Reading Road, Woodcote, Reading, 10:30am CONTACT Dick Hoskins; 0118 984 2660; rlvhoskins@aol.com; woodcote10k.org.uk COST - E/D NO

WILTSHIRE

•TRAIL •RURAL

ROUGH 'N' TUMBLE 10

VENUE Milton Lilbourne Village Hall, Marlborough, 11am CONTACT Stephen Goulding; 07534 997 795; 01672 851 670; gouldings@wiltrose.com; www.grassrootsevents.co.uk COST £12/E14 C/D 7/1 E/D NO

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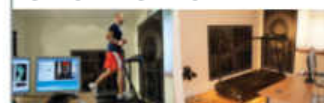
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I'M A RUNNER

Denise Welch

The actor and TV personality, 57, thinks she may finally have discovered the runner's high

I was the antithesis of the sporty girl when I was at school. I was the one who didn't want to go out into the cold in gym kit, so I would get detention instead.

For most of my life I've been slim and not worried about doing exercise. The fittest I'd been was when I was 28 and in a play called *Trafford Tanzi*, about female wrestlers – I did a two-hour workout every day.

Several years ago I was asked by a charity to do the Great Manchester Run. At first I guffawed with laughter, as I haven't got a competitive sporting streak in my body. But after the initial shock, I thought, 'Why not?'

I do my training in Cheshire, where I live. A friend and personal fitness coach, Sal Russ, got me in shape for the 10K race in 2006. I'd never run that far until race day.

The first time I ran Manchester I was in floods of tears at the finishing line. When people started yelling 'Come on, Denise!' at me I had to keep going.

I do all I can for the Teenage Cancer Trust. Those I meet as a trust supporter inspire me. I might not find running easy, but their battles with cancer are much harder.

This year I didn't run Manchester because I injured myself a few days before. I've got osteoarthritis in my knee; in a play called, ironically, *The Ancient Secret of Youth and the Five Tibetans* I felt it go when I had to bend backwards.



'Once you feel better, running can definitely help you stay well'

I've suffered from depression for more than 26 years. I don't believe it can be cured simply by putting your trainers on and running, but once you feel better, running can definitely help you stay well.

I enjoy running with my husband, Lincoln. My 14-year-old son, Louis, comes with us, but he keeps us away from the main roads so that his mates don't see us.

While running, I've come up with some great ideas for my first novel, *If They Could See Me Now*, which is out in February. I can get lost in my own thoughts and relax. Or I use the time to learn my lines.

I've an addictive personality for everything that's usually bad in life. In the past I've never found this buzz runners talk about. It's only in the last few years I'm able to truthfully say I enjoy the running I do.

I simply enjoy running at my own pace. I don't chase times – I just want to get round. I feel that at 57 if I can run, then any woman like me can, too.

MY FAVOURITE...



Hero

Being a fellow Geordie, it has to be Brendan Foster, who

I've known for years. He introduced me to Haile Gebrselassie recently, who was lovely.



Music

Outside I prefer the sounds of nature. But if I'm on the

treadmill, I'll play Motown. I also love the group The 1975, which my son Matthew is the lead singer in.



Treat

I've given up alcohol and smoking, and lost two stone

by eating well and exercising, but if I feel I deserve a treat after a run, I might have a slice of cheesecake.

● Denise supports the Teenage Cancer Trust, which provides specialist teenage units at NHS hospitals. If you would like to support the charity, visit the events and challenges section at teenagecancertrust.org.



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